

THE
DRAMATIC WORKS
OF
M. DE VOLTAIRE.

TRANSLATED
BY THE REV. MR. FRANCKLIN.

VOLUME XXIII.



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This VOLUME contains

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MAHOMET. A Tragedy.



P R E F A C E.

THIS trifle was exhibited in the summer, 1749, at Paris, amongst a number of entertainments which every year constantly produces in that city: in the still more numerous croud of pamphlets, which the town is over-run with, there appear'd at this time one extremely well worthy of notice, an ingenious and learned dissertation, by a member of the academy of Rochelle, on a question which seems for some years past to have divided the literary world, namely, whether we ought to write *serious comedies*? the author declares vehemently against this new species of the drama, to which, I am afraid, the little comedy of *Nanine* belongs: he condemns, and with reason, every thing that carries with it the air of a *city tragedy*: in reality, what can be more ridiculous, than a tragic plot carry'd on by low and vulgar characters? it is demeaning the buskin, and confounding tragedy, and, comedy, by a kind of bastard species, a monster, that cou'd only owe its birth to an incapacity of succeeding either in one or the other: this judicious writer blames, above all, those romantic forc'd intrigues which are to draw tears from the spectators, and which we call, by way of ridicule, the *crying comedy*: but into what species of comedy ought such intrigues to be admitted? wou'd they not be look'd upon as essential and unpardonable faults in any performance whatsoever? He concludes by observing, that if, in a comedy, pity may sometimes go so far as to melt into tears, they shou'd be shed by love alone: he cannot certainly mean by this the passion of love as it is represented in our best tragedies, furious, barbarous, destructive, attended with guilt and

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and remorse; but love gentle and tender, which alone is fit for comedy.

This reflection naturally produces another, which I shall submit to the judgment of the learned; *viz.* that amongst us tragedy has begun by appropriating to itself the language of comedy; we may observe, that love, in many of those performances where terror and pity shou'd be the chief springs, is treated as it ought to be treated in comedy. Gallantry, declarations of love, coquetry, archness and familiarity, are all to be met with amongst the heroes and heroines of Greece and Rome, with which our tragedies abound: so that, in effect, the natural and tender love in our comedies is not stolen from the tragic muse; it is not *Thalia* who has committed a theft upon *Melpomene*, but, on the other hand, *Melpomene*, who for a long time has worn the buskins of *Thalia*.

If we cast our eyes on the first tragedies that had such amazing success in the time of Cardinal *Richelieu*, the *Sophonisba* of *Mairet*, *Mariamne*, *Tyrannic Love*, and *Alcyone*, we shall remark that love, in every one of them, talks in a stile quite familiar, and sometimes extremely low; no less ridiculous than the pompous tone and emphasis of their heroism: this is perhaps the reason why, at that time, we had not one tolerable comedy, because the tragic scene had stole away all its rights and privileges: it is even probable, that this determin'd *Moliere* seldom to bestow upon his lovers any strong, lively and interesting passion for each other: tragedy, he perceiv'd, had anticipated him in this particular.

From the time when the *Sophonisba* of *Mairet* appear'd, which was our first regular tragedy, we began to consider the declarations of love from our heroes, and the artful and coquetish replies of our heroines, together with strong pictures of love and gallantry, as things essentially necessary to the tragic scene: there are writings of those times still extant which quote the following verses, spoken by *Massinissa* after the battle of Cirte, not without great Eulogiums on their extraordinary merit.

By

By mutual flame I find my flames approv'd,
 And love the more, the more I am belov'd;
 Sighs grow by sighs, and wishes wishes form,
 As waves by waves are lash'd into a storm;
 When two fond hearts indulgent Hymen chains,
 Alike shou'd be their pleasures and their pains.

The custom of talking thus about love corrupted even some of our best writers; even those, whose manly and sublime geniuses were made to restore tragedy to its ancient splendor, cou'd not escape the contagion: in some of our finest pieces we meet with, " * *an unhappy face, that subdued the courage of a Roman knight.*" The lover says to his mistress, " † *Adieu, thou too virtuous, and too charming object.*" To which the Heroine replies, " ‖ *Adieu, thou too unhappy and too perfect lover.*" Cleopatra tells us, that a princels, ‡ *who loves her reputation, if she owns her love, is sure to be belov'd.*" And that Cæsar " § *sighs, and in a plaintive tone acknowledges himself her captive, even in the field of victory.*" adding, that *she alone must be cruel, and make Cæsar unhappy.* To which her confidante replies, " ¶ *I wou'd venture to swear that your charms boast a power which they will never make use of.*"

In all those pieces of the same author, which were written after his *Death of Pompey*, we are sorry to find the passion of love always treated in this familiar manner; but, without taking the unnecessary trouble of

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producing

- * ————— un malheureux visage,
 Qui d'un Chevalier Romain captiva le courage.
 † Adieu, trop vertueux objet, & trop charmant.
 ‖ Adieu, trop malheureux, & trop parfait amant.
 ‡ ————— aimant sa renommee
 En avouant qu'elle aime est sure d'etre aimee.
 § ————— trace des soupirs, & d'un stile plaintif,
 Dans son champ de victoire il sedit son captif.
 ¶ T'oserois bien jurer que vos charmans appas
 Se vantent d'un pouvoir dont ils n'useront pas.

I have here given the original of these few short quotations, that the reader may see the full force, both of the absurdity, and of Mr. Voltaire's ridicule of it.

producing more examples of these glaring absurdities, let us only consider some of the best verses which the author of *Cinna* has brought on the stage as maxims of gallantry. "*There are certain secret ties, and sympathetic feelings, by whose soft affinity souls are link'd together, attack'd to, and struck by each other by I know not what charm, which it is impossible to account for.*" Wou'd one ever conceive that these sentiments, which are certainly highly comic, came out of the mouth of a princess of *Parthia*, who goes to her lover to ask her mother's life? In such a dreadful crisis, who wou'd talk of the *sympathetic feelings by whose soft affinity souls are link'd together*? Wou'd *Sophocles* ever have produced such madrigals? do not all these amorous sentiments belong to comedy only?

That great writer, who has carry'd the harmony of verse to such a point of perfection, he who made love speak a language at once so noble and so pathetic, has, notwithstanding, brought into his tragedies several scenes which *Boileau* thought much more proper for the elevated stile of *Terence's* comedies, than suitable to the dignity of the great rival of *Euripides*, who is even sometimes superior to him. One might quote above an hundred verses in this taste; not but that this familiar simplicity has its beauties, and may serve by way of preparation for the pathetic; but if these strokes of simplicity belong even to the tragic muse, with still more reason do they suit high comedy: this is the exact point where tragedy descends, and comedy raises itself; where the two arts meet, as it were, and touch each other: here their several limits are confounded: and if *Orestes* and *Hermione* are permitted to say,

' O do not wish for the fate of *Pyrrhus*, I should hate you too much—you wou'd love me still more: O that you wou'd look on me in another manner! you wish to love me, and yet I cannot please you: you wou'd love me, madam, by wishing me to hate—for, in short, he hates you; his heart is otherwise engaged he has no longer——

' Who told you, my lord, that he despises me? do you think the sight of me inspires contempt?'
If

If these heroes, I say, express themselves in this familiar manner, with how much greater reason shou'd we admire the *Misanthrope* speaking thus with vehemence to his mistress?

“ Rather blush you, for so you ought, I have too sure
 “ testimony of your falsehood—it was not in vain that
 “ my love was alarm'd, but think not I will tamely bear
 “ the injury without being reveng'd—'tis a treason, a
 “ perfidy which cannot be too severely punished; yes,
 “ I will give a loose to my resentment, I am no longer
 “ master of myself, passion intirely possesses me: mor-
 “ tally wounded as I am by you, my senses are no longer
 “ under the government of reason.”

Certainly, if all the *Misanthrope* was in this taste, it wou'd no longer be a comedy; and if *Orestes* and *Hermione* talk'd throughout in the manner they do in the lines above quoted, it wou'd be no tragedy: but after these two very different species met thus together, they fall back each into their proper sphere; one resumes the pleasant stile, and the other the sublime.

Comedy therefore, I repeat it once more, may be impassion'd, may be in transport, or in tears, provided at the same time that it makes the good and virtuous smile: but if it was intirely destitute of the *vis comica*, if, from beginning to end, it had nothing in it but the serious and melancholy, it wou'd then be a species of writing very faulty, and very disagreeable. It must be acknowledged, that there is no small difficulty in making the spectators pass insensibly from tears to laughter, and yet this transition, hard as it is to manage in a comedy, is not the less natural. We have already remark'd in another place, that nothing is more common than accidents that afflict the mind, some certain circumstances of which may, notwithstanding, excite at least a momentary mirth and gayety: thus, unhappily for us, is human nature framed. *Homer* represents even his gods laughing at *Vulcan's* awkwardness, whilst they are deciding the fate of the whole universe. *Hector* smiles at the fears of his son *Astyanax*, whilst *Andromache* is shedding tears. We often see, that even amidst the horror of battles, conflagrations, and all the disasters that

mortals are subject to, a good thing, luckily hit off, will raise a laugh, even in the bosom of terror and pity. In the battle of *Spires*, a regiment was forbid to give quarter, a german officer begg'd his life of one of ours, who answer'd him thus: "*Sir, ask any thing in the world else, but as to your life, I can't possibly grant it.*" This dry and whimsical answer pass'd from one to another, and every body laugh'd in the midst of slaughter and destruction; why therefore shou'd not laughter follow the most serious and affecting scenes in a comedy? don't we sympathise with *Alcmena's* distress, and yet laugh with *Sofia*? how ridiculous is it to dispute against experience! if those who still contest this matter love rhyme better than reason, let them take the following verses.

O'er this strange world still reigns the tyrant love,
 And all by turns his powerful influence prove;
 Sometimes a mighty empire he o'erthrows,
 Now soars in lofty verse, now creeps in prose;
 Sometimes in tragic garb his passion mourns,
 Sometimes the humbler comic muse adorns:
 Fire in his eyes, and arrows in his hand,
 He spreads or pains or pleasures thro' the land:
 In plaintive elegy his carols sweet
 Now sings, now jocund laughs at *Sylvia's* feet:
 For ever varying, and for ever new,
 From *serious Maro* down to gay *Chaulieu*:
 Bound by no laws, and to no verse confin'd,
 He rules o'er every state, and ev'ry mind,
 The universal idol of mankind.



N A N I N E.

A

C O M E D Y,

In Three Acts.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE Count d'OLBAN, a nobleman retir'd into the country.

THE Baroneſs de l'ORME, a relation of the Count's, a haughty imperious woman, of a bad temper, and disagreeable to live with.

THE Marchioneſs d'OLBAN, mother of the Count.

NANINE, a young girl, brought up in the Count's house.

PHILIP HOMBERT, a peasant in the neighbourhood.

BLAISE, the gardener.

GERMON, } Servants.

MARIN, }

SCENE, the Count d'OLBAN's country seat.

NANINE.



* N A N I N E :

A

C O M E D Y.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

The Count d'OLBAN, the Baronefs de l'ORME.

Bar. **I**N short, my lord, it is time to come to an explanation with regard to this affair; we are no children, therefore let us talk freely: you have been a widower for these two years past, and I a widow about as long: the law-suit, in which we were unfortunately engag'd, and which gave us both so much uneasiness, is at an end; and all our animosities, I hope, now bury'd with those who were the causes of them.

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Count.

* This Comedy is call'd in the French *Nanine*, ou le *prejugé vainca*; *Nanine*, or *Prejudice overcome*. It is written, as we are told in the title page, in verses of ten syllables. The absurdity of Comedies in rhyme I have already remark'd. The original begins thus:

Il faut parler, il faut, Monsieur le *Comte*,
Vous expliquer nettement sur mon *Compte*.

The reader cannot but observe, what villainous rhymes *Comte* and *Compte-à-re*, and perhaps will more readily forgive my reducing this comedy into plain prose.

Count. I am glad on't; for law-suits were always my aversion.

Bar. And am not I as hateful as a law-suit?

Count. You, madam?

Bar. Yes, I, fir: for these two years past we have liv'd together, with freedom, as relations and friends; the ties of blood, taste, and interest, seem to unite us, and to point out a more intimate connection.

Count. Interest, madam? make use of some better term, I beseech you.

Bar. That, fir, I cannot; but with grief I find, your inconstant heart no longer considers me in any other light than as your relation.

Count. I do not wear the appearance, madam, of a trisler.

Bar. You wear the appearance, fir, of a perjur'd villain.

Count. Ha! what's this?

[*Aside.*

Bar. Yes, fir: you know the suit, my husband began against you, to recover my estate, was, by agreement, to have been terminated by a marriage; a marriage you told me, of choice; you were engag'd to me, you know you were; and he who defers the execution of his promise seldom means to perform it.

Count. You know, I wait for my mother's consent.

Bar. A doting old woman: -well, fir, and what then?

Count. I love and respect her yet.

Bar. But I do not, fir. Come, come, these are idle frivolous excuses for your unpardonable falsehood: you wait not for her, or any body; perfidious, ungrateful man!

Count. Who told you so, madam, and whence all this violence of passion? who told you so? whence comes your information, madam?

Bar. Who told me? yourself, yourself. Your words, your manner, your air, your whole behaviour, put on on purpose to affront me: it shocks me to see it: act in another manner, or find some better excuses for your conduct: can you think me blind to the shameful unworthy passion that directs you, a passion for the lowest, meanest

meanest object? you have deceiv'd me, fir, basely deceiv'd me.

Count. 'Tis false, I cannot deceive; dissimulation is no part of my character. I own to you, there was a time when you were agreeable to me, I admir'd you, and flatter'd myself, that I shou'd have found in you a treasure to make amends for that, which heaven had depriv'd me of; I hoped in this sweet asylum to have tasted the fruits of a peaceful and happy union: but you have found out the means to destroy your own power. Love, as I told you long since, has two quivers, one fill'd with darts, tipp'd with the purest flame, which inspires the soul with tender feelings, refines our taste, and sentiments, enlivens our affection, and enhances our pleasures: the other is full of cruel arrows, that wound our hearts with quarrels, jealousy, and suspicion, bring on coldness and indifference, and remove the warmth of passion to make room for disgust and satiety: these, madam, are the darts which you have drawn forth, against us both, and yet you expect that I shou'd love.

Bar. There, indeed, I own myself in the wrong: I ought not to expect it: it is not in your power: but you are false, and now wou'd reproach me for it, and I must suffer your insults, your fine sim'lies and illustrations: but pray, fir, what is it I have done to lose this mighty treasure? what have you to find fault with?

Count. Your temper, your humours, madam: beauty pleases the eye alone, softness and complacency charm the soul.

Bar. And have not you your humours too, fir?

Count. Doubtless, madam; and, for that very reason, wou'd have an indulgent wife; one whose sweet complying goodness wou'd bend a little to my frailties, and condescend to reconcile me to myself, to heal my wounds without burning them, to correct without assuming, to govern without being a tyrant, to insinuate herself by degrees into my heart, as the light of a fine day opens gradually on the weak and delicate eye: he who feels the yoke that is put on him will always murmur at it; and tyrannic love is a deity whom

I abjure:

I abjure: I wou'd be a lover, but not a slave: your pride, madam, wou'd make me contemptible: I have faults, I own I have; but heaven made woman to correct the leaven of our souls, to soften our afflictions, sweeten our bad humour, sooth our passions, and make us better and happier beings: this was what they were design'd for; and, for my part, I wou'd prefer ugliness and affability to beauty with pride and arrogance.

Bar. Excellently well moralis'd, indeed; and so, when you insult, abuse, and betray me, I in return, with mean complacency, must forgive the shameful extravagance of your passion; and your assum'd air of grandeur and magnanimity must be a sufficient excuse to me for all the baseness of your heart.

Count. How, madam?

Bar. Yes, sir: I know you: it is the young Nanine who has done me this injury; a child, a servant, a field beggar, whom my foolish tenderness nourish'd and supported; whom your fond easy mother, touch'd with false pity, took up out of the bosom of penury and sorrow. O you blush, sir, do you?

Count. I, madam? I wish her well.

Bar. You love her, sir: I know you do.

Count. Well, madam, and if I did love her, know, I wou'd openly avow it.

Bar. Nay, I believe you are capable of it.

Count. I am so.

Bar. And wou'd you break thus through all the bounds of decency, degrade your rank, demean your birth, and, plung'd as you are in shame and infamy, laugh at and defy all honour?

Count. Call it prejudice: whatever you, or the world may think, madam, I never mistake vanity for honour and glory: you love pomp and splendor, and place grandeur and nobility in a coat of arms: I look for it in the heart. The man of worth, who has modesty with courage, and the woman who has sense and spirit, tho' without fortune, rank, or title, are in my eyes, the first of human kind.

Bar.

Bar. But sure they ought to have some rank and condition in life. Wou'd you treat a low born scholar, or an honest man of the meanest birth, because he had a little virtue, in the same manner, and with the same respect, as you wou'd a lord?

Count. The virtuous shou'd always have the preference.

Bar. This extravagant humility is insupportable: do we owe nothing then to our rank?

Count. Yes: to be honest.

Bar. My noble blood wou'd aspire to a higher character.

Count. That is a high one, which defies the vulgar.

Bar. Thus you degrade all quality.

Count. No: thus I do honour to humanity.

Bar. Ridiculous! what then becomes of the world? what is fashion?

Count. Fashion, madam, is despis'd by wisdom: I will obey its ridiculous commands in my dress perhaps, but not in my sentiments: No: it becomes a man to act like a man, to preserve to himself his own taste and his own thoughts: am I ridiculously to ask of others what I am to seek, or to avoid, to praise, or condemn? must the world decide my fate? surely I have my reason, and that shou'd be my guide: apes were made for imitation only, but man shou'd act from his own heart.

Bar. Why, this to be sure is freedom of sentiment, and talking like a philosopher. Go then, thou noble and sublime soul, go, and fall in love with village damsels, be the happy rival of ploughmen and hedgers: go, and support the honour of your race.

Count. Good heaven! what must I do? How am I to act?

S C E N E II.

The COUNT, the BARONESS, BLAISE.

Count. Well, sir, what do you want?

Blaise.

Blaise. Your poor gardener, fir, humbly beseeches your honour——

Count. My honour! well, *Blaise*, and what woud'st thou have of my honour?

Blaise. An please your honour, I wou'd fain—be marry'd and——

Count. With all my heart, *Blaise*, you have my consent; I like your design, and will assist you: I love folks shou'd marry. Well, and thy spouse elect, *Blaise*, what, is she handsome?

Blaise. O yes, fir, a delicate little morsel.

Bar. And does she like you, *Blaise*?

Blaise. O yes.

Count. Well, and her name is?

Blaise. Yes, 'tis——

Count. What?

Blaise. The pretty *Nanine*.

Count. *Nanine*?

Bar. Well, very well indeed! I approve of the match extremely.

Count. O heav'n! how am I sunk! it cannot, must not be. [*Aside.*]

Blaise. I's sure, maister will like it.

Count. What! did you say she lov'd you, rascal?

Blaise. I beg pardon, fir, I——

Count. Did she tell you that she lov'd you, fir?

Blaise. Why, no, fir, not absolutely, fir, not directly; but she seem'd to have a little sort of a sneaking kindness for me too: a hundred times has she said to me in the prettiest, softest, most familiar tone, 'help me, my dear friend, *Blaise*, to make a fine nosegay for my lord, that best of masters;' then wou'd she make the nosegay with such a pretty air, and look so thoughtful, and so absent, and so confused, and so——O it was plain enough.

Count. Away, *Blaise*, get thee gone——O! and am I agreeable to her then? [*Aside.*]

Blaise. Nay, master, now don't put off this little affair of mine,

Count. Ha!

Blaise.

Blaise. You shall see how this little spot of land will thrive under our hands soon: why won't you answer me, sir? You say nothing.

Count. O! my heart is too full: I must retire—[*Aside.* madam, your servant.

S C E N E III.

The BARONESS, BLAISE.

Bar. He loves her to distraction, that I'm positive of: by what charms, by what happy address, cou'd she thus steal his heart from me? Nanine! good heav'n! what a choice! what madness! Nanine! no! I shall burst with disappointment.

[*To herself.*

Blaise. What did you say, madam, about Nanine?

Bar. Insolent creature!

[*To herself.*

Blaise. Is not Nanine a charming girl?

Bar. No.

Blaise. Well, I say no more; but do, speak for me, speak for poor Blaise.

Bar. What a dreadful stroke is this!

Blaise. I have a little money, madam, a few crowns: my father left me three good acres of land, and they shall be hers; money, and land, every thing I have, body and soul, Blaise and all.

Bar. Believe me, Blaise, I wish you as well as you can wish yourself, and shou'd be glad to serve you: I shou'd be glad to see you marry'd this very night: nay, what's more, I'll give her a portion.

Blaise. O good dear baroness! how I do love you! is it possible you can make me so happy?

Bar. Alas! Blaise, I am afraid I cannot; we shall never succeed.

Blaise. O but you must, madam.

Bar. I wish to God she was your wife: wait for my orders.

Blaise. And must I wait? not long I hope.

Bar. Be gone.

Blaise.

Blaise. Servant, madam: I shall have her, I shall have her.

S C E N E IV.

The BARONESS.

Bar. [*Alone.*] What a strange adventure! cou'd I have receiv'd a more cruel injury? a more shameful affront? the Count d' Olban rivall'd by a gardener—here, boy, [*she calls out to her servant*] fetch Nanine to me: since I am so unhappy, I must examine her: where cou'd she have learn'd this art of flattery? who taught her to gain hearts, and to preserve them, to light up a strong and a lasting flame? where? doubtless, in her eyes, in plain and simple nature: but this shameful and unworthy passion of his is still a secret; it has not dared as yet to appear openly. D' Olban, I see, has his scruples about it: so much the worse; if he had none, I might still have hopes; but he has all the symptoms of true love: O! here she comes, the sight of her hurts me; nature is most unjust, to bestow so much beauty on such a creature; 'tis an affront to nobility: come this way, madam.

S C E N E V.

The BARONESS, NANINE.

Nan. Madam.

Bar. And yet, after all, she is not so very handsome; those great black eyes of her's express nothing; but if they have said, I love; ay, there's the danger: but I must—come this way, child.

Nan. I come, madam, as is my duty.

Bar. Yes: but you make me wait a little for you; pr'ythee, child, step on: how awkwardly she is made!
what

what a mien there is! he was never made for such a creature as thee.

Nan. 'Tis very true, madam: I assure you, I have often blush'd in secret, when I look'd on these fine clothes: but they were your first present to me, the effect of that goodness which I shall ever acknowledge, and of that generous care with which you are pleas'd to honour me: you took a pride in dressing me: O, madam, remember how often you have protected me: believe me, madam, I am still the same: why shou'd you wish to humble a submissive heart, which can never forget itself?

Bar. Bring that couch nearer to me—O I am distracted: whence come you? what have you been about?

Nan. Reading, madam.

Bar. Reading what?

Nan. An English book that was given me.

Bar. What's the subject of it?

Nan. 'Tis extremely interesting: the author wou'd have us believe that we are all brethren, all born equal, and on a level with each other; but 'tis an idle chimera, I can't reconcile myself to his doctrine.

Bar. She will soon, I suppose—what vanity! [*Aside.* bring me my standish, and pen and ink. [*To Nanine.*]

Nan. Yes, madam.

Bar. No; stay: give me something to drink.

Nan. What, madam?

Bar. Nothing: it's no matter: take my fan.—go and fetch my gloves—or—stay—it does not signify, you need not: come hither? take you care, I desire, never to think yourself handsome.

Nan. That, madam, is a lesson you have so often taught me, that, if I had so much vanity, and self-love had such influence over my foolish heart, you wou'd soon have cured me of it.

Bar. Where can she have learn'd all this? how I hate her! beauty and wit together! 'tis intolerable. [*Aside.* hark'ee, child, you know the tenderness I had for you in your infancy.

Nan. Yes, madam, and I hope my youth will be honour'd with equal goodness from you.

Bar.

Bar. Be careful then to deserve it: it is my intention now, this very day, nay this very hour, to fix and establish your happiness; judge then whether I love you.

Nan. To fix my happiness?

Bar. Yes: I will give you a portion: the husband I design for you is well-made, and every way worthy of you; a proper match for you in every particular, and the only one that at present cou'd suit you: you ought to thank me for the choice: in a word, 'tis Blaise the gardener.

Nan. Blaise, madam?

Bar. Yes: why that simpering? do you hesitate a moment to consent? my offers, madam, I wou'd have you to know, are commands; obey, or expect my resentment.

Nan. But, madam—

Bar. Let me have no *buts*, they offend me: a pretty thing indeed, for your impertinence to refuse a husband at my hands! that simple heart of yours is swell'd to a fine degree of vanity: but your boldness is a little premature, and your triumph will be of short duration: you take advantage of the capricious fortune of one lucky day, but shall soon see what will be the event. Thou ungrateful little wretch, hast thou the insolence to please? you understand me, madam, but I'll bring you back to that nothingness from whence you came, and you shall lament your folly and your pride: I'll shut you up for the rest of your life in a convent.

Nan. On my knees I thank you, madam; do, shut me up, my fate will be too mild: yes, madam, of all the benefits you have ever bestow'd on me, this, which you call a punishment, I shall esteem the greatest favour: shut me up for ever in a cloister, there I will thank you for your goodness, and bless my dear master: there I shall learn to calm those cruel fears, those dreadful alarms, those worst of evils, those passions that are far more dangerous to me even than your resentment, which fills me with terror and astonishment: O madam, by that anger, I entreat you, deliver me, save me,
save

save me, if possible, from myself; this moment I am ready to go.

Bar. What do I hear? can it be? are you in earnest, Nanine, or mean you to deceive me?

Nan. No: indeed I do not. O do me this charming, this divine favour; my heart stands too much in need of it.

Bar. [*With transport.*] Rise then, and let me embrace you. O happy hour! my dear Nanine, my friend, I'll go this instant and prepare your sweet retreat: O 'tis a charming thing to live in a convent!

Nan. 'Tis at least a shelter from the world, and all its cares.

Bar. O, my dear, 'tis a delightful situation.

Nan. Do you think so, madam?

Bar. This world is a hateful place—jealous—

Nan. 'Tis so indeed.

[*Sighing.*]

Bar. Foolish, wicked, vain, deceitful, inconstant, and ungrateful: O 'tis a horrid place.

Nan. Yes, I see it wou'd be fatal to me, I ought to flee from it.

Bar. You ought indeed: a good convent is the best haven of security: Now, my good lord, I think, I shall be beforehand with you.

Nan. Did you say any thing about my master, madam?

Bar. O Nanine, I love thee even to madness: this moment I wou'd, if possible, lock thee up never to come out again: but to night it is too late, we must wait till morning. Hark'ee, child, come to me at midnight to my apartment, and we will set off secretly for the convent: be ready by five at farthest.

S C E N E VI.

NANINE. [*Alone.*]

How distressful is my condition! what trouble and uneasiness do I feel! and what various passions rise in my

my soul ! to leave so good, so amiable a master, perhaps to offend him by it : and yet, if I had stay'd, this excess of his goodness might have brought on worse calamities, and put his whole family in confusion. The baroness seems apprehensive he has a particular regard for me : but his heart cou'd never stoop so low ; I must not, dare not think of it : and my lady seems desperately angry about it : am I hated then, and shou'd I be afraid of being below'd ? O but myself, myself I have most reason to fear, and my foolish heart, that beats so at the thought of him. What will become of me ? taken out of my humble state, my notions now are too refined and too exalted : it is a misfortune, nay, and it is a fault too, to have a mind above one's condition. I must go : I know it will kill me : but no matter.

S C E N E VII.

The COUNT, NANINE, a servant.

Count. Stay at that door there, somebody, d'ye hear ? bring chairs here, quick, make haste. [*He bows to Nanine, who makes him a low courtesy*] Come, sit down.

Nan. Who, I sir ?

Count. Yes : I will have it so : I mean to pay you, Nanine, that respect which your conduct, your beauty, and merit deserve : shines the diamond with less lustre, or is it less valuable, because found in a desert ? What's the matter ? your eyes seem bath'd in tears : O I see it but too plain ; our angry baroness, jealous of your charms, has been venting her ill humours on you, and left my poor girl weeping.

Nan. No, sir, no : her goodness, I assure you, to me was never greater than at present ; but every thing here softens and affects me

Count. I'm glad to hear it ; I was afraid it was some of her malice.

Nan. Why so, sir ?

Count.

N A N I N E.

Count. O my dear girl, jealousy reigns in every breast: every man is jealous when he is in love, and every woman even before she is so. A young and beautiful girl, who at the same time is good-natured and sincere, is sure to displease her whole sex: men are more just, and we endeavour as well as we can to revenge ourselves on you for your jealousy: but, with regard to Nanine, I only do her justice, I love that heart which is void of artifice; I admire the display of those extraordinary talents which you have so finely cultivated; and I am both surpris'd and charm'd at the ingenuous simplicity of your manners.

Nan. O, sir, my merit is small indeed; but I have seen you, have heard and been instructed by you: you have rais'd me too high above my humble birth: I owe you but too much: from you only I have learn'd to think.

Count. O Nanine, wit and good-sense are not to be taught.

Nan. I think too much, I fear, for one in my station: my fortune design'd me for the lowest rank in life.

Count. Your virtues have plac'd you in the highest: but tell me ingenuously, what effect had that English book I lent you?

Nan. Not convinc'd me at all, sir: I am more than ever of opinion, that there are hearts so noble and so generous, that all others must appear mean and vile when put in comparison with them.

Count. True, Nanine, and you are yourself a proof of it: but permit me to raise you for the future to a rank and station here less unworthy of you.

Nan. My condition, sir, is already too high, and too desirable for me.

Count. No, Nanine, that cannot be: henceforward I shall consider you as one of the family; my mother is coming, she will look on you as her daughter; my esteem, and her tender friendship, will put you on a different footing, and place you in a better rank than you have hitherto held under a proud and imperious woman.

Nan.

Nan. She only taught me my duty, fir—and a hard one it is to fulfil.

[*Aside.*

Count. What duty? yours, Nanine, is only to please, and that you always perform; wou'd I cou'd do so too! but you shou'd be more at your ease, and appear with more splendor; you are not yet in your proper sphere.

Nan. I am indeed quite out of it, and it is that which makes me unhappy; 'tis my misfortune, perhaps an irreparable one. [*Rising.*] O my lord, my master, remove, I beseech you, from me all these vanities: I am confus'd, overwhelm'd with your excess of goodness; let me live unknown and unenvy'd; heav'n form'd me for obscurity, and humility has nothing in it that to me is grating or disagreeable: leave me to my retreat; what shou'd I do in the world, what shou'd I wish to see there, after the admiration of your virtues?

Count. It is too much, I can resist no longer.

[*To himself.*

You remain in obscurity? you?

[*To Nanine.*

Nan. Whatever I may do, permit me to ask one favour of you.

Count. What is it? speak.

Nan. For some time past you have loaded me with presents.

Count. Pardon me, Nanine, I acted but as a tender father, who lov'd his child: I have not the art to set off my presents by flattery, I aim not at gallantry, and only desire to be just: fortune had done you wrong, and I meant to revenge the injury: but nature, in recompence for it, lavish'd all her bounties on you, and her I strove to imitate.

Nan. You have done a great deal too much; but I flatter myself I may be permitted, without being thought ungrateful, to dispose of those noble presents, which I shall ever hold dear because they came from you.

Count. You mean to affront me, sure.

SCENE

S C E N E VIII.

The COUNT, NANINE, GERMON.

Ger. My lady wants you ; she waits.*Count.* Let her wait then : what ! can't I speak a moment to you without being interrupted ?*Nan.* It gives me pain to leave you ; but you know, sir, she was my mistress.*Count.* No : I know it not, nor ever will.*Nan.* She has still a power over me.*Count.* No such thing : she shall have none—you sigh, Nanine, there's something at the bottom of that heart ; what's the matter ?*Nan.* I am sorry to leave you, sir—but I must—O heaven now all is over.[*She goes out.*]

S C E N E IX.

The COUNT, GERMON.

Count. [*To himself.*] She wept as she left me ; for a long time she has groan'd beneath the tyrannical caprice of this peevish baroness, who insults her : and by what right, or what authority ? but 'tis an abuse which I will never suffer : this world is nothing but a lottery of wealth, titles, dignities, rights, and privileges, barter'd for without legal claim, and scatter'd without distinction—here, you,—*Ger.* My lord.*Count.* To morrow morning lay this purse of a hundred louis-dor's upon her toilette ; be sure you don't fail ; you must then go and see after her servants below, they'll wait there.*Ger.* The baroness shall certainly have them on her toilette according to your orders.*Count.*

Count. Blockhead, they're not for her: for Nanine, I tell you.

Ger. O very well, sir, I beg pardon.

Count. Begone, leave me. [*Germon goes out.*] This tenderness of mine can never be a weakness in me: true, I idolize her; but my heart was not touch'd by her beauty only, her character is to the last degree amiable: I admire her soul; but then her low condition—It is too high; were she lower, I shou'd love her yet more: but can I marry her? doubtless I may; can one pay too dear for being happy? shall I fear the censure of an idle world, and let pride deprive me of all I wish for? but then custom—a cruel tyrant: nature has a prior right, and shou'd be obey'd: and so I am Blaise's rival too; and why not? Blaise is a man; he loves her, and he is in the right of it: she can be but in the possession of one, though the desire of all: gardeners may fight for her, and so might kings: my happiness will justify my choice.



ACT II. SCENE I.

The COUNT, MARIN.

COUNT. [*To himself.*]

WELL: this night is a whole year to me: not once have I closed my eye-lids: every body is asleep but I; Nanine sleeps in peace, a sweet repose refreshes her charms, whilst I wander from place to place, and can find no rest: I sit down to write, but can't: then strive to read, but all in vain; I don't know the words before me whilst I am looking on them, nor can my mind retain a single idea: methinks, in every page, I see the name of Nanine imprinted by some hand divine—hola! whose there? all asleep? Germon, Marin.

Mar.

Mar. Coming, fir.

[*Behind the scenes.*]

Count. You idle rascals, make haste, it's broad daylight; come, come.

Mar. Lard, fir, what spirit has rais'd you up so early this morning?

Count. Love.

Mar. O ho! my lady will let none of us sleep long in this house; what did you want, fir?

Count. Why, Marin, I must have, let me see, by to-morrow at farthest, six new horses, a new equipage, a clever chamber-maid, notable, and careful, a valet-de-chambre, and two footmen, young, and well-made, and no libertines; some diamonds, some very fine buckles, some gold trinkets, and some new stuffs; therefore be gone, ride post to Paris this instant, never mind killing a few horses.

Mar. O ho! I see how it is; you are caught; my lady baroness is to be our mistress to day, I suppose; you are going to be marry'd to her at last?

Count. Whatever my intention is, go you about your business; fly, and make haste back.

Mar. I'm gone, fir.

S C E N E II.

The COUNT, GERMON.

Count. [*To himself.*] And shall I then enjoy the sweet pleasure of honouring, of making happy the dear object of my love? The baroness, I know, will be in a rage: with all my heart, let her rave as long as she will; I despise her, and the world, and its opinion; and am afraid of no body: I will never be the slave of prejudice, it is an enemy whom we ought to subdue, those who make a rational mind more virtuous, and those only are respectable: but hark! what noise is that in the court? a chariot sure: it must be so; yet who cou'd come at this time in the morning? my mother perhaps. Germon—

Ger. Sir.

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Count.

Count. What is that ?

Ger. A chariot, fir.

Count. Whose is it ? any body coming here ?

Ger. No, fir, they're going.

Count. Going ? who ? where ?

Ger. The baroness, fir, going out immediately.

Count. O with all my heart, let her go for ever if she pleases !

Ger. Nanine and she are this minute setting out.

Count. O heav'n ! what say'st thou ? Nanine ?

Ger. So the maid says, fir.

Count. How is this ?

Ger. My lady, fir, is going with her this morning, to put her into a neighbouring convent.

Count. Away : fly : let us begone : but what am I about ? I am too warm to talk to them : no matter, I'll go ; I ought—but stop, that must not be, I shou'd at once discover all my passion : no—go Germon, stop them, let every thing be fast ; bring Nanine to me, or answer it with your life. [*Germon goes out.*] So they wou'd have carry'd her off ! what a dreadful stroke ! ungrateful, cruel, unjust woman ! how have I deserv'd this ! what have I done ! I only lov'd, and adored her ; but never declar'd my passion ; never endeavour'd to force her inclinations, or to alarm her fearful innocence : why shou'd she fly from me ? the more I think on it, the more I am astonish'd.

S C E N E III.

The COUNT, NANINE.

Count. My sweet girl, is it you ? what, run away from me ? answer me, explain this myst'ry to me : terrify'd, I suppose, with the baroness's threats, you were willing to escape ; and that tender regard which I have long had for your virtues, I know, has quickened her resentment : you cou'd not sure yourself have thought of leaving me, of depriving this place of its fairest ornament : last night, when I saw you in tears, tell me, Nanine,

nine, had you any intention of this? answer me, tell me, why wou'd you have wish'd to leave me?

Nan. Behold me on my knees, and trembling before you.

Count. Rise, Nanine, and tell me—I tremble more myself. *[Raising her up.]*

Nan. My lady, sir,——

Count. Well—what of her?

Nan. That lady, sir, whom I honour and esteem, did not, I assure you, force me to the convent.

Count. And cou'd it then be your own choice? O misery.

Nan. It was, I own it was: I entreated her to restrain my wand'ring thoughts—she wanted to have marry'd me.

Count. Indeed! to whom?

Nan. To your gardener.

Count. O the worthy choice!

Nan. I, sir, was asham'd, and to the last degree unhappy: I who in vain endeavour to stifle sentiments far above my condition, I whom your bounty had rais'd too high, must be punish'd by the loss of that goodness which I never deserv'd.

Count. You punish yourself, Nanine, and for what?

Nan. For having dared to raise the resentment of your relation, sir, who was once my mistress; I know, sir, I am disagreeable to her; the very sight of me disgusts her: she has reason indeed, for, when I was near her, I was guilty of a weakness which I shall ever feel; it grows upon me every hour: but I wou'd have torn it from my breast; I would have humbled, by the austerities of a convent, this proud heart, exalted by your goodness, and revenged on it the involuntary crime: but the bitterest grief I felt, was my fear of offending you.

Count. *[Turning from her, and walking about.]* What sentiments! what a noble and ingenuous mind! Can she be prejudic'd in my favour? was she afraid of loving me? O exalted virtue!

Nan. If I have offended you, I beg a thousand pardons; but permit me, sir, in some deep retreat to hide
C 2 my

my sorrows, and to reflect in secret on my own duty, and your goodness to me.

Count. No more of that : now, observe me, the baroness is your friend, and out of her generosity has provided you with a servant, a rustic, a boor, for your husband. I know of one who will at least be less unworthy of you : in birth and fortune far superior to Blaise ; young, honest, and well provided for : a man, I assure you, of sense and reflection ; his character very different from those of the present age : if I am not much mistaken, he'll make you an excellent husband : is not this better than a convent ?

Nan. No : sir, I own to you, this new favour which you wou'd bestow on me has nothing in it that can give me any real satisfaction : you know my grateful heart, read there my real sentiments, and see why I wish to retreat from the world : a gardener, or the monarch of the whole world, who shou'd offer marriage to me, wou'd be equally displeasing.

Count. You have determin'd me : and now, Nanine, know the man for whom I have design'd you : you already esteem him : he is yours ; he adores you : that husband is—myself. I see, you are troubled and surpriz'd : but speak to me ; my life depends on you : O recollect yourself, you are strangely agitated.

Nan. What do I hear ? can it be ?

Count. It is no more than you deserve.

Nan. In love with me ! O do not think, do not imagine I will ever dare to claim my conquest : no, sir, never will I suffer you to descend thus low for me : such marriages, believe me, sir, are always unhappy : taste goes off, and repentance alone remains. No, I will call your ancestors to witness—alas ! sir, think not on me : you took pity on my youth : this heart, which you have form'd, which is your own work, wou'd be unworthy of your care, if it cou'd accept from you this noblest present. No, sir, I owe you at least this refusal : my heart shall sacrifice itself for your sake.

Count. No more : for I am resolv'd, and you shall be my wife. Did you not this moment assure me you wou'd refuse every other man, tho' he were a prince ?

Nan.

Nan. I did, and repent not of the resolution.

Count. Do you hate me then?

Nan. Shou'd I have fled from, shou'd I have avoided, shou'd I have fear'd, if I had hated you?

Count. It is enough, and I am fix'd.

Nan. What then have you determin'd on?

Count. Our marriage.

Nan. Think, sir.

Count. I have thought of every thing.

Nan. And foreseen too?

Count. I have.

Nan. If you love me, believe me, sir——

Count. I do believe—that I have resolv'd on the only means to make myself happy.

Nan. But you forget——

Count. I have forgot nothing: every thing is order'd, and every thing shall be ready.

Nan. What! in spite of all I say, will your obstinate passion——

Count. Yes, spite of thee, my impatient love must urge the happy moment. I will quit thee for a minute, that henceforth we may never part: adieu, my dear Nanine.

SCENE IV.

NANINE, *alone.*

Good heaven! do I dream? or am I indeed arriv'd at the submit of earthly happiness? 'tis not the honour, great as it is, 'tis not the splendor that dazzles me: no. I despise it all: but to wed the most generous of men, the dear object of all my fearful wishes, him whom I was so much afraid of loving, him whom I adore, yet I love him too much to wish he shou'd demean himself for my sake: but it is impossible to avoid it; I cannot now escape him: what can I do? heaven, I trust, will direct me, and support my weakness, perhaps even—but I'll write to him—and yet how to begin, and what to say—

what a surprise! I will write immediately, before I enter into this solemn engagement.

S C E N E V.

NANINE, BLAISE.

Bla. O there she is: well, my little maid, my lady has spoke to you in my favour, has not she? ha? she writes on, and takes no notice of me.

Nan. O Blaise, good-morrow to you. [*Writing on.*]

Bla. Good-morrow is but a cold compliment.

Nan. [*writing.*] Every word I writ: doubles my distress, and my whole letter is full of doubts and uneasiness.

Bla. How she writes off hand! O she's a great genius; and a monstrous wit: I wish I was a wit too, then I'd tell her——

Nan. Well, fir.

Bla. Lack-a-day, she's so clever, I'm afraid to speak: I shall never be able to break my mind to her—yet I was hot upon't, and came here o'purpose, that I did.

Nan. Dear Blaise, you must do me a piece of service.

Bla. Marry, two, and you will.

Nan. I shall trust to your discretion, to your good heart, Blaise; nay, I do you but justice.

Bla. O no ceremony; for look you, ma'am, Blaise is ready to serve you, and there's an end of it. Come, come, make no secret.

Nan. You often go to the neighbouring village, to Removal, the right hand of the road.

Bla. Yes, yes.

Nan. Cou'd you find one Philip Hombert for me there?

Bla. Philip Hombert? I know nothing of him: what sort of a man is he?

Nan. He came there, I believe, but yesterday evening, do you enquire him out, and give him immediately this money, and this letter.

Bla. O money is it?

Nan.

Nan. And at the same time deliver him this packet: go on horse-back, that you may return the sooner: away, make haste, and be assur'd I'll remember you for it.

Bla. I wou'd go for you to the world's end—this Philip Hombert is a happy rogue: the purse is full: all ready Rhino. What, is it a debt?

Nan. Yes: and well-prov'd: nothing can be more sacred, therefore take care of it: hark'ee, Blaise, Hombert may not be known in the village, perhaps he is not yet return'd: if you can't give the letter into his own hands, bring it me back again: my dear friend, remember that.

Bla. My dear friend!

Nan. I shall depend upon you.

Bla. Her dear friend! O lud!

Nan. I rely intirely upon you, and expect every thing from your fidelity.

S C E N E VI.

The BARONESS, BLAISE.

Bla. What a message! and where the deuce cou'd this money come from? it wou'd have been of service to me in house-keeping: but she has a friendship for me, and that's better than money, so away we go.

[As he is putting the money and letter into his pocket, he meets the baroness, and runs full against her.]

Bar. How now, booby? a little more and you'd broke my head.

Bla. I beg your pardon, madam.

Bar. Where are you going? have you heard any thing of Nanine? what is she about? is the count in a violent passion? what have you got there, a letter?

Bla. O that's a secret: poise on her!

Bar. Let me look at it.

Bla. Nanine will be angry.

Bar. Nanine! cou'd she write, and send it by you? give it me this minute, or I'll break off your match immediately; give it me, I say.

Bla. He! he!

[*Laughing.*]

Bar. What do you laugh at?

Bla. Ha! ha!

[*Still laughing.*]

Bar. I must know the contents of this;—[*Breaks open the letter*] if I am not mistaken, they concern me nearly.

Bla. [*Laughing*] Ha! ha! ha! how she is nick'd now! she has got nothing there but a scrap of paper: but I shall keep the money, and carry it to Philip Hombert: yes, yes, I must obey my mistress. Servant, ma'am.

S C E N E VII.

The BARONESS alone.

Now let's see what we have got. [*Reads.*] “Both
“my joy and tenderness are unspeakable, as is my happiness also: what a moment was this for you to come
“in! when I cannot see or hear you, cannot throw myself into your arms: but, I conjure you, take these
“packets, and accept the contents of them. Know,
“I have been offer'd a most noble and truly enviable
“condition in life, such as I might well be dazzled
“with the prospect of: but there is nothing which I
“wou'd not sacrifice to the only one upon earth whom
“my heart ought to love.” Very fine indeed! upon my word, Mrs. Nanine, an excellent stile: how prettily she writes! the innocent orphan: her passion speaks most eloquently: a rare billet this! O, thou sly jade: thus you deceiv'd poor Blaise, and thus depriv'd me of my lover: this going into a convent, I find, was all a feint, a pretence; and the count's money, it seems, is for Philip Hombert: thou little coquette! but I am glad on't: the count's perfidiousness to me deserv'd this return: I thought indeed Nanine's heart was as mean as her birth, and now I am satisfy'd of it.

S C E N E

S C E N E VIII.

The COUNT, BARONESS.

Bar. But here comes the philosopher, the sentimental count d'Olban, the wife lover, the man above prejudice: your servant, noble count, approach and laugh, my dear lover, at the most ridiculous circumstance: do you know Philip Hombert, of Remival? but, to be sure, you can't be a stranger to your—rival.

Count. What is all this, pray?

Bar. This billet perhaps will inform you: this Hombert must be a handsome lad.

Count. You are too late, madam, now with your schemes; my resolution once made, I am not to be shaken: be satisfy'd, madam, with the shameful trick you wanted to play me this morning.

Bar. You'll find this new one a worse, I believe: there, read: [*Gives him the letter*] you'll like it vastly: you know the hand, and you know the virtue of the dear nymph that has subdued you: [*Whilst he is reading it he seems confounded, grows pale, and angry*] well sir, what think you of the stile?—he sees nothing, says nothing, hears nothing: poor man! but he deserves it.

Count. Did I read aright? it cannot be. I am astonish'd, thunder-struck; ungrateful sex! perfidious creature!

Bar. I know his temper well; naturally violent, quick and resolute: he'll do something immediately.

[*Aside.*]

S C E N E IX.

The COUNT, BARONESS, GERMON.

Ger. Yonder comes madam d'Olban: she's in the avenue already.

Bar. Is the old woman return'd?

Ger. Sir, fir, my lady, your mother, is coming.

Bar. His anger has taken away his hearing: the letter operates finely.

Ger. Sir.

[*Bawling out to him.*]

Count. Does she think——

Ger. My lady, fir, your mother.

[*Aloud.*]

Count. What is Nanine doing at this instant?

Ger. Writing in her own apartment—but, fir——

Count. Go, seize her papers; [*With an air of coolness.*] bring me what she writes, and then let her be sent away.

Ger. Who, fir?

Count. Nanine.

Ger. I can never have the heart to do it, fir: O, fir, if you knew how she charms us all, so noble, so good!

Count. Do it, fir, or see my face no more.

Ger. I obey, fir.

[*He goes out.*]

SCENE X.

The COUNT, BARONESS.

Bar. Now, the day is ours: I give you joy, fir, of your return to reason: now, fir, is not it true, as I told you, the low-bred always retain something of their former condition, and persons of family alone have hearts truly noble? Blood, fir, let me tell you, does every thing, and meanness of birth will inspire Nanine with sentiments you never suspected her of.

Count. That I don't believe: but come, we'll talk no more about it, but endeavour to make amends for past errors: every man has his follies, at some part of his life; we all go wrong; and he is least to blame who repents the soonest.

Bar. 'Tis well observ'd.

Count. Never mention her to me again: be silent on that head, I entreat you.

Bar. Most willingly.

Count.

Count. I beg this subject of our dispute may be intirely forgot.

Bar. But will you remember then your former vows?

Count. Well, well, I understand you, I will.

Bar. And quickly too, or you will not repair the injury: our marriage so shamefully deferr'd is an affront—

Count. That shall be made amends for; but, madam, we must have——

Bar. Have what? we must have a lawyer.

Count. You know, madam, that—— I waited for my mother.

Bar. And here she comes.

S C E N E XI.

The MARCHIONESS D'OLBAN, the COUNT, BARONESS.

Count. [*To his Mother.*] Madam, I shou'd have—
O, Philip Hombert! [*Aside*] but you have prevented me: my respect, and tenderness— [*To his mother*] with that air of innocence too! perfidious wretch.
[*Aside.*]

Mar. Why, you rave, child; I heard indeed, as I pass'd thro' Paris, that your head was a little touch'd, and I find there was some truth in it; how long has this misfortune——

Count. Good-heaven! how confused I am!

Mar. Does it seize you often?

Count. It never will again, madam.

Mar. I should be glad to speak with you alone.
Good morrow, madam. [*Turns to the baroness and makes her a formal courtesy*]

Bar. The old fool? [*Aside.*] Madam [*Turning to the Marchioness*] Madam, I leave you the pleasure of entertaining the count at your leisure, and retire. [*She goes out.*]

S C E N E

S C E N E XII.

The MARCHIONESS, the COUNT.

Mar. [*Talking very fast, and in the manner of a little prattling old woman.*]

Well, sir, and so you intend to make the baroness my daughter-in-law: 'twas this, to tell you the truth, that brought me here so soon: she's a peevish, impertinent, proud, opinionated creature, and one who never had the least regard for me: last year, when I sup'd with the marchioness Agard, she said before all the company, I was a babbler. Lord forbid I shou'd ever sup there again: a babbler! besides I know, between you and me, she is not so rich; and that, let me tell you, son, is a great point, and we ought to be well inform'd about it: they tell me that the chateau d'orme did but half of it belong to her husband, and that the other half was disputed by a long law-suit, that is not finish'd to this day: that I had from your grand-papa, and he always told truth: ay, he was a man; there are few such now a'days: there is nothing now at Paris but a set of half-men, vain, foolish, impertinent coxcombs, talking upon ev'ry subject, and laughing at times past. O, their eternal clack distracts me, prating about new kitchens, and new fashions: we hear of nothing now but bankrupts, and distress, and ruin: the wives, in short, are licentious, and the husbands simpletons: every thing grows worse and worse.

Count. Who cou'd have thought it? [*Reading the letter over again.*] this is a desperate stroke indeed. Well, Germon?

S C E N E XIII.

The MARCHIONESS, the COUNT, GERMON.

Cer. Here's your lawyer, sir.

Count.

Count. O! let him wait.

Ger. And here's the paper, sir, she sent you.

Count. Give it me—well, let me see: [*Reading.*] she loves me, she says here, and refuses me out of—respect. Faithless woman! thou hast not told me the true reason of that refusal.

Mar. My son's head is certainly turn'd: 'tis the baroness's doing: love has taken away his senses.

Count. Is Nanine gone! shall I be rid of her?

[*To German.*]

Ger. Alas! sir, she has already put on her old rustic garb with the greatest modesty, and never murmur'd or complain'd.

Count. Very likely so.

Ger. She bore her misfortune with the utmost tranquillity, whilst every body about her was in tears.

Count. With tranquillity, say'st thou?

Mar. Who are you talking about?

Ger. O madam, poor Nanine, she is going to be driven away, and every body laments the loss of her.

Mar. To be driven away! how is this? I don't understand it: what! my little Nanine go! call her back again: my charming orphan! what has she done, pray? why, Nanine was my present to you. O I remember, at ten years of age she delighted every body that saw her: our baroness took her, and I said then she wou'd be ill-used; I knew it wou'd be so: but you never mind what I say, you will do every thing of your own head: but let me tell you, turning Nanine out of doors thus is a very bad action.

Count. Alone, on foot, without money, without assistance!

Ger. O, sir, I forgot to tell you: an old man ask'd after you below, and says he wants to speak to you on an affair of importance, which he can communicate to none but yourself: he wants to throw himself at your feet.

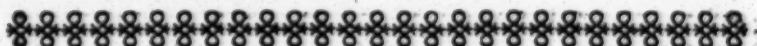
Count. In my present unhappy situation of mind, am I fit to converse with any body?

Mar. Thou art uneasy enough, I believe, child, and so am I too, to drive away poor Nanine, and make up a marriage

marriage which you knew wou'd be disagreeable to me: come, it was not a wise thing; in three months time you will be weary of one another: I'll tell you what happen'd exactly like this to my cousin the marquis of Marmure: his wife was as sour as verjuice, tho', by the by, yours is worse; when they marry'd, they thought they lov'd one another, and in two months after they were parted. My lady went to live with her gallant, a foolish, sharking, extravagant fop; and my lord took a vile, tricking, ridiculous coquette! fine suppers, country houses, horses, cloaths, a rascally steward, new trinkets bought upon trust, lawyers, contracts, interest-money, all together soon ruin'd them, and in two years both went together to the hospital. O, and now I think of it, I remember another story, more tragical, and more extraordinary than the other, it was of a——

Count. My dear mother, we must go in to dinner: come—cou'd I ever have suspected such infidelity!

Mar. 'Tis really dreadful: but I'll tell it you all at table: in proper time and place, son, it may be of great use to you. Away.



ACT III. SCENE I.

NANINE, cloath'd as a country girl, GERMON.

Ger. **W**E are all in tears at the thoughts of losing you.

Nan. It is time to go: I've staid too long already.

Ger. But you wont leave us for ever, I hope, and in this dress too?

Nan. Obscurity was my first condition.

Ger. What a change! and only from this morning: to suffer is nothing, but to be degraded is terrible.

Nan.

Nan. No, no, there are a thousand times worse misfortunes.

Ger. I admire your patience, and humility: surely my master must have been ill advis'd: our baroness has certainly abus'd her power: she must have done you this injury, the count cou'd never have the heart.

Nan. I am indebted to him for every thing; and, if he thinks fit to banish me, I must submit; his favours are his own, and he has a right to recal them.

Ger. Who wou'd ever have expected such a change? what do you intend to do with yourself?

Nan. To retire, and repent.

Ger. How we shall all detest the baroness!

Nan. They have made me miserable, but I forgive them.

Ger. But what shall I tell my master from you when you are gone?

Nan. Tell him, I thank him for restoring me to my former condition: tell him that, for ever sensible of his goodness, I shall forget nothing but his—cruelty.

Ger. You melt my very soul; I cou'd leave this house immediately to go along with you wherever you went: but Blaise is before hand with us all. he will go and live with you, and we are all ready to follow him.

Nan. No, Germon, that I'm sure you are not. O Germon, to be driven out in this manner,—and by whom?

Ger. The devil is certainly at the bottom of this business: you are leaving us, and my master is going to be marry'd.

Nan. Marry'd, say'st thou? indeed? nay, then let us be gone: O he was too dangerous for me—farewel.

Ger. Well! after all, my master must have a cruel heart, to banish so sweet a creature: she seems a most amiable girl, but in this world one shou'd swear to nothing.

SCENE

S C E N E II.

The COUNT, GERMON.

Count. Well, is she gone at last?*Ger.* Yes, sir, 'tis done.*Count.* I'm glad on't.*Ger.* Then, sir, you have a heart of iron.*Count.* Did Philip Hombert meet and give her his hand?*Ger.* What Philip Hombert, sir? alas! sir, poor Nanine went off without a creature to give her his hand; she wou'd not even accept of mine.*Count.* And where is she gone?*Ger.* That I know not; most probably to her friends.*Count.* Ay, at Remival, I suppose.*Ger.* Yes, I believe she went that road.*Count.* Go, Germon, immediately, and conduct her to that convent where the baroness was going this morning, I'll lodge her in that safe retreat: these hundred louis d'or's will secure her reception; carry them to her, but take care she does not know they come from me: tell her 'tis a present from my mother: upon no account mention my name to her.*Ger.* Very well, sir, I shall obey your orders.*[He goes towards the door.]**Count.* Germon, you saw her as she went off?*Ger.* I did, sir.*Count.* Did she seem dejected? did she weep?*Ger.* She behav'd still better, sir; a few tears dropp'd from her, but she strove as much as she cou'd to repress them.*Count.* Did she let fall any thing that betray'd her sentiments? did you remark——*Ger.* What, sir?*Count.* Did she say any thing of me?*Ger.* Yes, sir; a great deal.*Count.* Tell me, then, rascal, what did she say?*Ger.*

Ger. That you were her master, her best and kindest benefactor; that she shall forget every thing—but your cruelty.

Count. Away—be sure you take care she never returns; [*Germon going out*] and hark'ee, Germon.

Ger. Sir.

Count. One word more: remember, if by chance, as you are conducting her, one Philip Hombert should follow you, that you treat him in a proper manner.

Ger. O, sir, I'll use him most politely, and treat him with a good drubbing, that you may depend on: I'll do the business honestly, I warrant you: young Hombert, you say?

Count. The same.

Ger. Very well: I have not the honour to know him, but the first man I see will I trim most heartily, and afterwards make him tell me his name. [*He goes towards the door and comes back.*] This young Hombert, I'll lay my life, is some lover of hers, a beau, a prig, I suppose, the cock of the village. Let me alone to deal with him.

Count. Do as I bid you, and immediately.

Ger. I thought there was some lover in the case—and Blaise too puts in his claim, I suppose. Ay: they always love their equals better than their masters.

Count. Be gone, I tell you.

SCENE III.

The COUNT.

Count. [*Alone.*] He's in the right, and has hit on the true cause of my unhappiness, but I shall myself be the punisher of my own folly. I must now marry the baroness; it is determin'd, and I can't avoid it: 'tis dreadful; but I have deserv'd it: 'twill at least be a convenient match: she is not very tractable indeed, but every man may rule, if he has a mind to it; and he who has resolution may, at any time, be master in his own house.

SCENE

S C E N E IV.

The COUNT, BARONESS, MARCHIONESS.

Mar. Well, son, you are going to marry this lady here?

Count. Yes, madam.

Mar. This night she is to be your wife and my daughter-in-law?

Bar. If you approve of it, madam; I suppose I shall have your consent.

Mar. Why, I must give it, I think: but to-morrow I shall take my leave of you.

Count. Your leave, madam, why so?

Mar. I shall take my Nanine with me: since you have thought fit to turn her out of doors, I shall take her under my protection: I have a match in my eye for her: I propose marrying her to the young chief justice, nephew to the attorney-general, Jean Roc Souci; he whose father met with that comical adventure at Corbeil; you must have heard of him: yes, I will take care of this poor child, I'm determin'd: she is a jewel, and deserves to be well set. I'll marry her off immediately. Your servant.

Count. My dear mother, don't be in a passion: leave me to manage my own affairs, and let Nanine go into a convent.

Bar. Indeed, madam, you may believe us, such a girl as Nanine is not fit to go into a family.

Mar. Ha! why, what's the matter?

Bar. O a little affair only.

Mar. But pray——

Bar. O nothing at all.

Mar. Nothing! a great deal, I'm afraid: I understand you mighty well: some little indiscretion I suppose: nothing more likely, for to be sure she's very handsome: Ay, ay, we are all frail; we tempt, and are tempted; the heart has its weakness: young girls are always a little coquettish: but come, it is not so bad as you make it; tell me fairly, what my poor child has done?

Count.

Count. I tell you, madam ?

Mar. You seem, after all, at the bottom to have some regard for the girl, and perhaps you may——

S C E N E V.

The COUNT, MARCHIONESS, BARONESS,
MARIN, booted.

Mar. I've done it, fir ; it's all agreed for.

Mar. What's agreed for ?

Bar. Ay, what, fir ? what ?

Mar. Why, fir, I've done as you order'd me, spoke to the tradesmen, and you'll have your equipage to-morrow.

Bar. What equipage ?

Mar. Every thing, madam, that your future spouse had ordered ; six fine horses, and a charming berlin ; I'm sure your ladyship will like it ; it's very fine ; the pannels all varnish'd by Martin : the diamonds too are brilliant, and well-chosen ; and the new stuffs quite in taste.—O nothing comes up to 'em.

Bar. And had you order'd all this ? *[To the count,*

Count. I had—*[Aside]* but for whom !

Mar. Every thing will come to-morrow morning in the coach, and will be ready for your wedding in the evening ; O there's nothing like Paris for getting every thing at a minute's warning, if you have but money. As I came back, I call'd on the lawyer ; he's just by, finishing your affair.

Bar. It has hung a long time in suspense.

Mar. I wish it wou'd hang these forty years. *[Aside.*

Mar. In the hall I met a poor old man, sighing and in tears ; he has waited a long time, he says, and begs to speak to you.

Bar. An impertinent fellow ! let him go about his business : he has chose a wrong time to trouble us now.

Mar. Why, so, madam ? have a little consideration : son, let me tell you, it's very wrong to repulse poor people

ple in this manner ; I have told you over and over, when you was a child, you ought to treat them with indulgence ; hear what they have to say ; be courteous, and affable to 'em : are not they men as well as yourself : we don't know perhaps who we affront, and may repent our hardness of heart : the proud never prosper. [*To Marin.*] Go, see for that old man.

Mar. I will ma'am. [*He goes out.*]

Count. Forgive me, madam, my respects are always due to you, and I am ready to see this man, in spite of my present embarrassment.

S C E N E VI.

The COUNT, MARCHIONESS, BARONESS,
a PEASANT.

Mar. Come, come, speak, don't be afraid.

[*To the Peasant.*]

Pea. O, my lord, for heaven's sake hear me ; permit me to fall at your feet, and to give you back——

Count. Rise, friend ; I'll not be kneel'd to ; do not imagine me capable of such pride : you seem to be an honest man, do you want employment in my family ? who are you ?

Mar. Chear up, man.

Pea. Alas ! sir, I am the father of—Nanine.

Count. You ?

Bar. Your daughter's a slut.

Pea. This, sir, is what I fear'd : this is the cruel stroke that has wounded my poor heart : I thought indeed so much money cou'd not fairly belong to one in her condition : we little folks soon lose our integrity when we come among the great.

Bar. There he's right enough : but still he's a deceiver, for Nanine is not his daughter, she was an orphan.

Pea. It is too true, she was so : I left her with her poor relations in her infant years, having lost her mother,

ther, with all my fortune ; oblig'd by necessity, I went to serve abroad ; and as I wou'd not have her pass for the daughter of a soldier, forbad her ever to mention my name.

Mar. Why so ? for my part, I respect a soldier : we stand in need of them sometimes.

Count. What is there shameful in the profession ?

Pea. It meets indeed with less honour than it deserves.

Count. The prejudice against them is inexcusable. I own, I esteem an honest soldier, who hazards his life in the defence of his king and country, much more than an important self-sufficient scoundrel, whose knavish industry sucks up the blood of his fellow-subjects.

Mar. You must have been in a great many battles : let me have an account of them all ; I long to hear it.

Pea. In my present unhappy condition you must excuse me : let it suffice to inform you, that I receiv'd a thousand promises of advancement ; but, without friends, how was it possible to rise ? thrown amongst the common croud, all I cou'd do was to distinguish myself, and honour my only reward.

Mar. You were then well born ?

Bar. Fye : how can you think so ! well born indeed ?

Pea. No, madam : but I was born of honest parents, and merited—a better daughter.

Mar. Cou'd you have had a better ?

Count. Well ! go on.

Mar. A better than Nanine ?

Count. Prithee, go on.

Pea. My daughter, I understood, was brought up here, and treated in the kindest manner ; I thought myself happy, and bless'd heaven for your goodness, and paternal care of her ; I came to the neighbouring village, full of hopes and fears ; I own I trembled for her dangerous youth ; and, by this lady's intimation, find I had but too much reason ; it has shock'd me to the soul ; but I thought a hundred louis d'or's, besides diamonds, was a treasure too great to be fairly come by : she cou'd never be mistress of them, but at the expence of her innocence : the bare suspicion makes me shudder ; if it be
so,

so, I shall die with grief and shame : but I came as soon as possible, to give 'em you back again : they are yours, therefore, I beseech you, take 'em : if my daughter is to blame, punish me, but don't ruin her.

Mar. O my dear son, I cannot bear this ; it overpowers me.

Bar. What is all this ? a dream ? a trick ?

Count. O ! what have I done ?

Pea. [*Taking out the purse and the letter.*] Here, fir, take 'em.

Count. I take 'em ! no : they were given to her, and she has made a noble use of them : was it to you then the message was deliver'd ? who brought it ?

Pea. Your gardener, fir, in whom Nanine ventur'd to confide.

Count. Was it directed to you ?

Pea. It was, I own it, fir.

Count. O grief, O tenderness ! what excess of virtue in them both ! but now your name ?—O I am lost, distracted.

Mar. Ay, your name. What mystery is this ?

Pea. Philip Hombert de Gatine.

Count. O my father !

Bar. What does he say ?

Count. How day breaks in upon me ! I have done wrong, and I must make amends for it : O if you knew how culpable I have been ! I have injur'd the sublimest virtue. [*He steps aside, and speaks to one of his servants.*] Away : fly.

Bar. What is all this emotion for ?

Count. My coach immediately.

Mar. Now, madam, you must be her protectress : when we have done such an injury, we shou'd blush at nothing so much as an imperfect repentance ; my son often has his whims, which people are too apt to mistake for unpardonable follies ; but at bottom he has a generous soul, and is naturally good ; I can do what I please with him : you, my daughter-in-law, are not so well-dispos'd.

Bar. I shall grow out of all patience : how confus'd and thoughtful he looks ! what strange scheme now is he

he meditating upon ? well, fir, what do you intend to do ?

Mar. Ay, for Nanine ?

Bar. Make her a handsome present, and satisfy her.

Mar. That will be the least we can do.

Bar. But as to seeing her that I never will : she shall not come nigh the castle : do you hear me ?

Count. Yes, I hear you.

Mar. What a heart of stone ! *[Aside.*

Bar. Don't give my suspicions cause to break out, fir, Ha ! you hesitate.

Count. *[After a pause of some time.]* No, madam, I am resolv'd.

Bar. That respect at least is owing me ; nay, to both of us.

Mar. And can you be so cruel, son ?

Bar. What step do you propose to take ?

Count. 'Tis taken already : you know my heart, madam, and the frankness of it : I must be plain with you : I had promis'd you my hand ; but the design of our marriage was only to put an end to a tedious law-suit between us, which I will now do immediately, by willingly resigning to you all those rights and pretensions which were the foundation of it : even the interest shall be yours ; I give up every thing, take, and enjoy it : since we cannot be man and wife, let us at least live as friends and relations : let every thing that gave mutual uneasiness be forgot : there is no reason why, because we can't love, we shou'd hate each other.

Bar. Your falsehood is what I expected : but I renounce your presents, and yourself : yes, traitor, I see now who you mean to live with, and how low your passion sinks you : go, and be a slave to her, I leave you to your unworthy choice. *[She goes out.*

SCENE

S C E N E VII.

The COUNT, MARCHIONESS, PHILIP HOMBERT,

Count. No, madam, 'tis not unworthy, my soul is not blinded by an idle passion: that virtue which it is my duty to reward ought to melt, but cannot debase me: what they call meanness in this old man constitutes his merit, and makes him truly noble: if I wou'd be so, I must pay the price of it: where souls are thus ennobled by themselves, and distinguish'd by superior characters, we shou'd pass over common rules: their birth, low as it is, when attended with such virtues, will make my family but more illustrious.

Mar. What are you talking about?

S C E N E VIII.

The COUNT, MARCHIONESS, NANINE,
PHILIP HOMBERT.

Count. Look at her, and guess. *[To his mother.*

Mar. *[To Nanine]* My dearest child, come to my arms: but she is strangely clothed, and yet how handsome she looks, and modest too!

Nan. *[Pays her respects to the Marchioness, and then runs to her father.]* O nature demands my first acknowledgments, my dear father!

Philip Hom. O heaven! my daughter! O sir, you have made me amends for forty years afflictions.

Count. Ay, but how must I repair the injury I have done to such exalted virtue! to come back in this dress, how mean it is, but she adorns it; Nanine does honour to every thing & speak, my Nanine, can your goodness pardon the affront?

Nan.

Nan. Can you, sir, doubt my forgiveness of it? I never thought, after all your bounty to me, you cou'd injure me.

Count. If you have indeed forgot the wrong I did you, give me a proof of it: once more, and only once, I take upon me to command you; but this once you must swear—to obey me.

Philip Hom. I am sure she owes it to you, and her gratitude—

Nan. He need not doubt, sir, of my obedience.

[*To her father.*]

Count. I shall depend upon it: let me tell you then, that all your duty is not yet paid: I have seen you on your knees to my mother, and to your own father; one thing still remains for you, and that is, now, before them, to embrace—your husband.

Nan. Who? I?

Mar. Are you in earnest? can it be?

Philip Hom. O my child!

Count. By your permission, madam. [*To his mother.*]

Mar. My dear child, the family will be in a strange uproar about it.

Count. O, when they see Nanine, they must approve.

Philip Hom. What a stroke of fortune! O, sir, I never thought you cou'd descend thus low.

Count. You promis'd to obey, and I must have it so.

Mar. My son.

Count. My happiness, madam, depends on this important moment: interest alone, we know, has made a thousand marriages; we have seen the wisest men consult fortune and character only: her character is irreproachable; and as to fortune, she wants it not: justice and inclination shall do what avarice has so often done before: let me, then, madam, have your consent, and finish all.

Nan. No, madam, you must not consent; indeed you must not, oppose his passion, oppose mine: let me intreat you, do: love has blinded him, do you, madam, remove the veil: let me live far from him, and at a distance only adore his virtues: you know my condition;

you see my father : can I, ought I, ever to wish to call you mother ?

Mar. Yes ; you can, you ought : it is enough : I can hold out no longer : this last generosity has entirely subdued me : it tells me how much I ought to love : it is as singular, as extraordinary, as Nanine herself.

Nan. Then, madam, I obey ; my heart can no longer resist the power of love.

Mar. Let this happy day be the worthy recompense of virtue, * but let it not be made a precedent.

END of the THIRD and LAST ACT.

— que ce jour

Soit des vertus la digne recompense

Mais sans tirer jamais à consequence.

The last line is intirely superfluous, and seems indeed to overthrow the tendency of the whole piece, which wou'd certainly have ended better with the first ; but the author wanted a verse to answer the other, and was resolv'd to throw it in, however absurdly.





T H E
B A B B L E R.

A
C O M E D Y,

Represented in August, 1756.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

EUPHEMIA.

DAMIS.

HORTENSIA.

TRASIMON.

CLITANDER.

NERINE.

PASQUIN.

Several Footmen belonging to DAMIS.

THE



THE
* B A B B L E R.
A
C O M E D Y.

ACT I. SCENE I.

EUPHEMIA, DIMAS.

Euph. **D**ON'T imagine, my dear, that, by what I'm going to say, I mean to exercise the authority of a mother, always ready, as you know I am, to listen in my turn to your reasons when I think them good ; my intention is not to lay my commands on you, but to give you my advice ; it is my heart which speaks to you, and that experience I have had in the world makes

D 3

* This comedy is called in the original L'INDISCRET, literally translated, THE INDISCREET, but our language does not admit of the adjective without the substantive ; and the *Indiscreet Man* wou'd sound almost as bad : I have therefore taken the liberty to substitute another title, which perhaps may convey a more complete idea of the principal character, than the vague term of an *indiscreet man*, which may be applied to follies of a different kind from that which the author meant to ridicule in the following piece.

makes me foresee evils which I wou'd endeavour to prevent: you have been at court, I think, not above two months; believe me, 'tis a dangerous situation: the perfidious group of courtiers always look upon a new comer with an eye of malevolence, and soon find out all his imperfections: from the first moment, they condemn him, without pity or remorse; and, which is still worse, their judgment is irrevocable: be guarded against their malice: on the first step we take in life, the rest of it must in a great measure depend: if you once make yourself ridiculous, the world will think you always so: the impression will remain: it is in vain, as you advance in years, to change your conduct, and assume a more serious behaviour: you will suffer a long time from old prejudices: even if we do grow better, we are still suspected; and I have often known men pay dearly in their old age for the errors of their youth: have a little regard therefore to the world, and remember you ought to live now more for that than for yourself.

Dam. Now I cannot possibly conceive what all this long preamble tends to.

Euph. I see it appears to you both absurd and unnecessary: you despise those things which may be of the greatest consequence to you; one day or other perhaps you may believe me, when it will be too late: to be plain with you, you are indiscreet: my too long indulgence pass'd over this fault in your infancy, in your riper years I dread the effects of it: you are not without abilities, a good understanding, and a good heart; but, believe me, in a world so full of injustice, virtue will not make amends for vice; our faults are censur'd on every occasion, and perhaps the worst we can be guilty of is indiscretion: at court, my dear, the most necessary art is, not to talk well, but to know how to hold one's tongue: this is not the place where society enjoys itself in the freedom of easy conversation; here they generally talk without saying any thing, and the most tiresome babblers have the best success: I have been long acquainted with the court, and bad enough it is: but, whilst we live there, we ought to conform to it.

it. With regard to the women, you shou'd be remarkably cautious; talk but seldom of them, and still less of yourself; pretend to be ignorant of all they do, and all they say; conceal your opinion, and disguise your sentiments; but, above all, be master of your secrets: he who tells those of another will always be esteem'd a villain; and he who tells his own, be assur'd, will, here at least, be look'd on as a fool. What have you to object to this?

Dam. Nothing: I am intirely of your opinion: I abominate the character of a tattler: that is not my foible, I assure you: so far from being guilty of the vice you seem to reproach me with, I now fairly confess to you, madam, that I have a long time conceal'd a thing from you which I ought to have told you of; but in life, you know, one must sometimes dissemble. I love, and am belov'd, by a most charming widow, young, rich, and handsome, as prudent as she is amiable; in a word, it is Hortensia: judge, madam, yourself of my happiness; judge, if it were known, how miserable it wou'd make all our courtiers, who are fighting for her: we have conceal'd our mutual passion from every one of them: this engagement has been made now for these two whole days past, and you knew nothing of it.

Euph. But I have been at Paris all that time.

Dam. O, madam, never was man so happy in his choice: the more you approve of it, the more satisfaction shall I feel, and the more pleasure in my pursuit of her.

Euph. I am sure; Damis, the confidence you repose in me, is a mark of your friendship, and not of your imprudence.

Dam. I hope you never doubted that.

Euph. But seriously, Damis, you shou'd reflect on the prospect of happiness before you: Hortensia, I know, has charms, but, besides that, she is the best match that cou'd have offer'd itself in all France.

Dam. I know she is.

Euph. She is intirely her own mistress, and can choose for herself.

Dam. So much the better.

Eupb. You must take care how you manage her, mark her inclinations, and flatter them.

Dam. O, I can do better: I know how to please her.

Eupb. Well said, Damis: but remember, she's not fond of noise and bustle; no blustering or flashy airs will be agreeable to her: she may, like other women, have her foibles, but even in love-matters she'll always act with discretion: above all, let me advise you, not to shew off in public with her, nor appear at court together, as if on purpose to be stared at, and become the topic of the day: secret and mystery is all her taste.

Dam. And yet the affair must be known at last.

Eupb. But, pray, what lucky accident introduc'd you to her? she never admits young men to her toilette; but, like a prudent woman, carefully avoids the croud of wild sparks that are perpetually after her.

Dam. To tell you the truth, I have never been at her house yet: but I have ogled her a long time, and, thank heaven, with success: at first she sent back my letters unopen'd, but soon after read them, and now writes to me again: for near two days past I have had strong hopes, and, in a word, intend this very night to have a *tête à tête* with her.

Eupb. Well: I think I'll go and see her too: the mother of a lover, who is well-receiv'd, cannot, I imagine, but be agreeable to her. I may contrive to speak of you, and prevail on her to hasten the match, on which I shall tell her your happiness depends: get her consent, and make her yours as soon as you can; I'll do my best to assist you: but speak of it to nobody else, I charge you.

Dam. No, madam: never was mother more tender and affectionate, or friendship more sincere; and to please her shall, for the future, be my first ambition.

Eupb. All that I desire of you is, to be happy.

SCENE

SCENE II.

DAMIS alone.

Dam. My mother's right: address and cunning are absolutely necessary in this world; there is no succeeding without them. I am resolv'd to dissemble with the whole court, except ten or a dozen friends, whom I may talk freely with: but first, by way of trial of my prudence, let me tell my secrets to myself a little, and consider, now nobody's by, what fortune has bestow'd upon me. I hate vanity, but there's no harm in knowing one's self, and doing ourselves justice: I have some wit, am agreeable, well receiv'd at court, and thought, I believe, by some, to be admitted to the king's private hours: then, I am certainly very handsome, can dance, sing, drink, and dissemble with the best of 'em: made a colonel at thirteen, I have reason to hope for a staff at thirty; happy in what I have, and with a good prospect before me; I'll keep Julia, and marry Hortensia; when I have possess'd her charms, I'll be guilty every day of a thousand infidelities, but all with prudence and œconomy, and without ever being suspected as a rambler: in six months time I shall make away with half her fortune, and enjoy all the court by turns, without her knowing any thing of the matter.

SCENE III.

DAMIS, TRASIMON.

Dam. Good morrow, governor.

Tra. Hang him for coming across me.

[*Aside.*]

Dam. My dear governor, let me embrace thee.

Tra. Excuse me, sir, but I really—

Dam. Positively I will: come, come—

Tra. Well, what, what do you want?

Dam. Nay, don't frown so, man, pr'ythee unbend a little: I am the happiest of mortals.

Tra. I came to tell you, sir——

Dam. O, by heavens, you kill me with that hard frozen face of yours.

Tra. I can't help it, sir, nor can I smile at present, for, let me tell you, you have got a bad affair upon your hands

Dam. Not so very bad, sure.

Trn. Erminia and Valere exclaim violently against you: you have spoke of them, it seems, too lightly, and old lord Horace too desir'd me to tell you——

Dam. O, a mighty matter indeed to be uneasy about! Horace an old lord? an old fool, a proud coxcomb, puffed up with notions of false honour, low enough at court, he puts on an air of importance in the city, and is as ignorant as he wou'd fain seem knowing: as for madam Erminia, it's pretty well known I had her, and left her abruptly, an ill natur'd busy body; I believe you know a little of her lover, my friend, Valere; did you ever remember such a starch'd, affected, strain'd, left-handed understanding? O, by the by, I was told yesterday in confidence, that his huge elder brother, that important creature, is well received by Clarice, and the fat countess is bursting with spleen and disappointment. Well but, my old commandant, how go your love affairs?

Tra. You know I don't trouble myself much about the sex.

Dam. That's not my case; for I do, and i'faith, both in court and city, they keep me pretty well employ'd: but listen, whilst I intrust you with a secret, on which the happiness of my life depends.

Tra. Can I serve you in it?

Dam. No: not in the least.

Tra. Then pray tell me nothing about it.

Dam. O but the rights of friendship——

Tra. 'Tis that very friendship which makes me shrink from the weight of a secret which is entrusted to me, not out of real regard, but from mere folly and weakness; which any body else might keep as well as myself;

self; which is generally attended with a thousand suspicions, and may chance to give us both a great deal of uneasiness, me for knowing, and you for saying more than we ought.

Dam. Say what you will about it, captain, I must let you have the pleasure of reading this billet-doux, which this very day——

Tra. What a strange humour——

Dam. You'll say it's written with a great deal of tenderness.

Tra. Well, if you insist upon it——

Dam. 'Tis dictated by love itself: you'll see how fond she is of me: 'tis the hand that wrote it which makes it so valuable: but you shall see it: zounds, I've lost it; positively I can't find it—hola, la Fleur, la Brie.

S C E N E IV.

DAMIS, TRASIMON, several Footmen.

Foot. Did you call, sir?

Dam. Step immediately into the gallery, and bring me all the letters I receiv'd this morning: go to the old duke, and—O here it is, the blundering rascals had put it there by mistake. You may go. [*To the footmen*] Now, you shall see it; mind now, I beg you'll attend.

S C E N E V.

DAMIS, TRASIMON, CLITANDER, PASQUIN.

[*Clit. with a letter in his hand, speaking to Pasquin.*]

Stay you, Pasquin, in this garden all day; be sure you mark every thing that passes; observe Hortensia well; and bring me an account of every step she takes: I shall know then——

SCENE

SCENE VI.

DAMIS, TRASIMON, CLITANDER.

Dam. O here comes the marquis: good morrow, marquis.

Clit. Morrow to you. [*A letter in his hand.*]

Dam. Why, what's the matter with you to-day, with that long melancholy face? what the duce ails you all? every creature I see looks gloomy and dismal to-day, I think; but I suppose——

Clit. I have but too much reason. [*Aside.*]

Dam. What are you muttering about?

Clit. What a poor unhappy creature I am!

[*In a low voice.*]

Dam. Come, to give you both a little spirit, suppose I read you this little billet of mine, ha, marquis?

Clit. What letter? can it be? surely it is from Hortensia: cruel creature! [*Aside, looking at the letter.*]

Dam. 'Tis a letter wou'd make a rival hang himself.

[*To Clitander.*]

Clit. You are indeed a happy man, if you are belov'd.

Dam. That I most assuredly am; but you shall hear; your city ladies don't write in this stile: observe her. [*He reads*] "At length I yield to the passion which has taken possession of my heart; I wou'd have conceal'd it, but 'tis impossible: why shou'd I not write what my eyes, no doubt, have a thousand times inform'd you of? yes, my dearest Damis, I own I love you; the more perhaps, because my heart, fearful of your youth, and fearful of itself, for a long time resisted my inclination, and told me I ought not to love you. After the confession of such a weakness, ought not for ever to reproach myself for it? but the more frankly I avow my tenderness for you, with the more care you ought to conceal it."

Tra. You take care, I see, to obey the lady's commands most punctually: a mighty discreet lover, to be sure!

Clit.

Clit. Happy is that man who receives such letters, and never shews them.

Dam. Well, what do you think of it? is not it——

Tra. Very strong indeed.

Clit. Charming.

Dam. And the writer a thousand times more so. O if you did but know her name! but in this wicked world we must have a little discretion.

Tra. Well, we don't desire you to tell us.

Clit. You and I *Damis* love one another very well, but prudence——

Tra. So far from desiring you to acquaint us with particulars, that——

Dam. Come, come, I love you both too well to dissemble with you: I know, you think, and the whole court has proclaim'd it, that I have no affair here with any body but *Julia*.

Clit. Nay, they have it from yourself; but as to us, we don't believe a word of it.

Dam. To be sure, there was something between us, and the affair went on tolerably well till now: we lov'd one another, and then we parted, and then we met again; all the world knows that

Clit. The world, I assure you, knows nothing at all about it.

Dam. You think I'm very fond of her still, but you're mistaken; upon honour I am not.

Tra. 'Tis nothing to me, whether you are or are not.

Dam. *Julia* is handsome, that she is; but then she's fickle: the other, O the other is the very thing.

Clit. Well, and this charming woman——

Dam. Come, I see you will know, and I must tell you: my dear friend, look at this picture, only look at it: did you ever see two such eyes? the most charming, most adorable creature; painted by *Mace*; that you know is saying every thing; you know the features, don't you?

Clit. O heav'n! 'tis *Hortensia*.

Dam. You seem surpriz'd.

Tra. You forget, sir, that *Hortensia* is my cousin, that she is tender of her honour, and a declaration of this kind——

Dam.

Dam. O give her up, give her up, man ; why, I have six cousins ; you shall have 'em all : make up to 'em, ogle 'em, deceive 'em, desert 'em, print their love-letters, with all my heart, it will give me no uneasiness : we shou'd have enough to do indeed to be out of humour with one another, to vindicate the honour of our cousins : it's very well here, if every one can answer for themselves.

Tra. But Hortensia, fir——

Dam. Is the woman I adore ; and I tell you again, fir, she loves me, and me only ; and, to make you more angry, I intend to marry her.

Clit. Cou'd I have been more cruelly injur'd ? [*Aside.*

Dam. Our wedding will be no secret, but you sha'n't be there—cousin.

Tra. A cousin, fir, may have some power over her, and that you shall know soon. Your servant, fir.

S C E N E VII.

DAMIS, CLITANDER:

Dam. How I detest that fellow ! the ridiculous pendant, with his affected airs of romantic virtue ; a tedious, heavy, tiresome brute ! you seem to be mighty curious about that picture, and examine it closely.

Clit. I must be master of myself, and dissemble.

[*Aside.*

Dam. You may observe perhaps, one of the brilliants is missing at the corner there : I was a long chace yesterday, and there was such jostling and pushing one another ; you must know I had four pictures loose in my pocket, and this unfortunately met with a mischance ; the case broke, and a brilliant dropp'd out : as you go to town to-morrow, you may call at Frénaye's, he's dear, but clever in his way : I wish you'd chuse a diamond at his shop, as if it was for yourself ; for, between you and me, I owe him a few pounds : here, take

ake the picture, but don't shew it to any body. Your servant.

Clit. Where am I?

[*Aside.*

Dam. Well, God be wi'you, Marquis, I shall depend upon you. Take care, be discreet now.

Clit. Can he possibly do it?

[*Aside.*

Dam. [*Returning.*] I love a discreet friend: you shall be my confidant: I'll tell you all my secrets. Is it possible for a man to be happy, to possess every thing his heart can wish for, and not tell it to another? where's the joy of keeping our insipid pleasures to ourselves? one may as well have no friends as not trust 'em, and happiness uncommunicated is no happiness at all: I have shewn you a letter, and a picture, but that's not all.

Clit. Why, what else have you?

Dam. Do you know that this very night I am to meet her

Clit. O dreadful! horrible!

[*Aside.*

Dam. To night, Clitander, before the ball is over, alone, and unsuspected, I am to meet her by appointment in this garden.

Clit. O I am lost, undone: this last cruel stroke—

[*Aside.*

Dam. Is not that charming, my friend? dost not rejoice with me, boy?

Clit. And will Hortensia meet you?

Dam. Most certainly; just at dusk I expect her; but the declining sun already gives me notice of my approaching happiness: I must be gone. I'll go to your lodgings, I think, and dress: let me see, I must have two pounds of powder for my hair, and some of the most exquisite perfume; then will I return in triumph, and finish the affair immediately. Do you, in the mean time, prowl about here, that you may have some share in the happiness of your friend; I shall leave you here as my deputy, to keep off impertinent rivals.

S C E N E VIII.

CLITANDER, *alone.*

How hard a task it was to conceal my grief and my repentment ! after a whole year of sincerest passion, when Hortensia's heart, weary'd of resistance, began at length to soften and relent, for Damis thus to come and change her in an instant ! one fortunate moment has done what my long and faithful services in vain solicited : nay, she even prevented his wishes, gave this young coxcomb that picture which I had so much better deserv'd : she writes to him too ! O that letter wou'd have kill'd me with extacy : and then, to make my misery complete, she has writ to me this morning never to see her more : this hair-brain'd fellow has got hold of her heart, and will carry her off in triumph : O Hortensia, how cruelly halt thou deceiv'd me !

S C E N E IX.

CLITANDER, PASQUIN.

Clit. So, Pasquin, I have found out my rival.

Pas. Indeed, sir ? so much the worse.

Clit. Yes : she's in love with that blockhead, Damis.

Pas. Who told you so ?

Clit. Himself : the proud coxcomb boasted to me of the treasure he had stolen from me. Here, Pasquin, look at this picture ; out of mere vanity he has left it in my hands, only that he may triumph the more. O Hortensia, who cou'd ever have believ'd that Damis would supplant Clitander !

Pas. Damis is a good pretty fellow.

Clit. [*Collaring him.*] Ha ! rascal, an impertinent young fool, that——

Pas.

Paf. Very true, fir, and perhaps—but, for heaven's sake, don't strangle, fir me : between you and me fir, he's nothing but a babbler, a prig.——

Clit. Be he what he will, she prefers him to me, Pasquin ; therefore now is the time to exert thy usual skill, and serve me : Hortensia and my rival are to meet this night in the garden, by appointment ; find out some method, if possible, to prevent it.

Paf. But, fir——

Clit. Thy brain, I know, is fertile ; take money as much as thou wilt : for heaven's sake disappoint my rival : whilst he is tricking out his insignificant person, we may rob him of the happy moment : since he is a fool, let us take the advantage of his folly, and by some means or other keep him away from this place.

Paf. And this you think mighty easy to be done : why, fir, I wou'd sooner engage to stop the course of a river, a stag upnn a heath, or a bird in the air, a mad poet-repeating his own verses, a litigious woman that has a suit in chancery, a parson hunting after a benefice, a high-wind, a tempest, or thunder and lightning, than a young coxcomb going to a rendezvous with his mistress.

Clit. And will you then abandon me to despair ?

Paf. Stay : a thought is just come into my head : let me see, Hortensia and Damis have never seen me ?

Clit. Never.

Paf. You have got her picture ?

Clit. I have.

Paf. Good : and you have got a letter that she wrote you.

Clit. Ay, and a cruel one it is.

Paf. Her ladyship's orders I think to you, never to visit her again.

Clit. It is so.

Paf. The letter is without a direction I think ?

Clit. It is, rascal, and what of that ?

Paf. Give me the picture and the letter immediately ; give them me, I say.

Clit. Shall I give a picture into other hands that was entrusted to my care ?

Paf.

Paf. Come, come, no ceremony: a pretty scruple indeed? give 'em me.

Clit. Well, but, Pasquin——

Paf. Leave every thing to me, and rely on my discretion.

Clit. You want to——

Paf. Away, away: here comes Hortensia.

SCENE X.

HORTENSIA, NERINE.

Hor. What you say, Nerine, is very true, Clitander is a worthy man; I know the warmth of his passion for me, and the sincerity of it: he is sober, sensible, constant, and discreet: I ought to esteem him, and so I do; but Damis is my taste: I find, by the struggles of my own heart, that love is not always the reward of virtue; we are always won by an agreeable outside; and for one who is captivated by the perfections of the soul, a thousand are caught by the eye; I blush at my own inconstancy: but Clitander comes no more here, I assure you.

Ner. What a strange humour this is! how resolute you are!

Hor. No: I ought not to be there first, and positively I will not.

Ner. Are you afraid of the first meeting?

Hor. To tell you the truth, Damis takes up all my thoughts: this very day I have had a visit from his mother, who has greatly increas'd my prejudices in favour of her son: I see she is extremely eager for the match, and presses it in the warmest manner: but I want to see the man himself in private, and sound his real sentiments.

Ner. You have no doubt of his regard for you?

Hor. None: I believe, nay I know he loves me; but I want to hear him tell me so a thousand and a thousand times over: I want to see if he deserves my love, to
know

know his temper, his character, and his heart: I wou'd not yield blindly to inclination, but judge of him, if I cou'd, without passion or prejudice.

S C E N E XI.

HORTENSIA, NERINE, PASQUIN.

Pas. Madam, my master Damis has sent me here to acquaint you privately—

Hor. Is not he coming himself?

Pas. No, madam.

Ner. The little villain!

Hor. Not come to me?

Pas. No, madam: but, as in point of honour he thinks himself oblig'd, he has sent you back this portrait.

Hor. My picture!

Pas. Please to take it, madam.

Hor. Am I awake?

Pas. Pray, ma'am, make haste, for I am really in a hurry: I have two more pictures to carry back for my master, and two to receive: and so, madam, till we meet again, I am your most obsequious—

Hor. Perfidious wretch! I shall die with grief.

Pas. He desir'd me moreover, madam, to inform you, that you need not ogle him any more, and that for the future he shou'd be glad, if you wou'd find out some other dupe to laugh at besides himself.

S C E N E XII.

HORTENSIA, NERINE, DAMIS, PASQUIN.

Dam. Here I am to meet the dear object of my wishes.

[*At the further end of the stage.*]

Pas. Ha! Damis! then I am caught; but I'll take courage however, and proceed: [*he runs up to Damis and*

and takes him aside.] I belong, fir, to lady Hortensia, and have the honour to be employed on her little affairs; I have, fir, here a billet-doux for you.

Hor. What a change is here! what a reward for my tender passion!

Dam. Let me see, ha! how's this? [*Read*] "you deserve my regard, I know the esteem that is due to your virtues, but I cannot love you." Was ever such abominable perfidy? this is what I little expected indeed; but it shall be known; the public shall be acquainted with it: it shall be no secret at court, I can assure her.

Hor. Could he carry his infamous perfidy so far as this?

[*At the other part of the stage.*

Dam. There, madam, you see what value I set on your correspondence.

[*He tears the letter.*

Pas. O madam, blush for his behaviour: you saw him tear the letter, which you condescended to write to the ungrateful man.

[*Running up to Hortensia.*

Hor. He has sent back my picture: perish, thou wretched image of my ineffectual charms!

[*She throws down the picture.*

Pas. *There, fir, you see how she treats you; she has thrown away your picture, and broke it in pieces.

[*Coming back to Damis.*

Dam. There are some ladies in the world who receive the original in a very different manner, I can assure her.

Hor. O, Nerine, what a regard I had for this ungrateful man! Tell me, fellow, [*Speaking to Pasquin, and giving him money.*] for whose sake is it I am thus deserted? to what happy object am I sacrific'd?

Pas.

* Pasquin's scheme of deceiving them both by the letter and picture is well imagin'd: but the execution of it very awkwardly and inartificially conducted: his running backwards and forwards from one to the other, the lover and his mistress being both on the stage together, whilst the deceit is carry'd on against them, together with the absurdity of leaving them together afterwards without coming to an eclaircissement, are all circumstances to the last degree absurd and improbable. Voltaire's comedies, tho' they have some merit, are not excellent, and this is one of the poorest of them.

Paf. O, madam, to five or six beauties, whom he pretends to be in love with, though he cares as little for them as for yourself; but your most dangerous rival is the fair Julia.

Dam. Here, take this ring, and now, tell me honestly, on what impertinent court fool your sweet mistress has fix'd her affections. *[Coming up to Pasquin.]*

Paf. No one, sir, deserves her so well as yourself; but, to tell you the truth, there is a certain young abbé who ogles her perpetually; not to mention that I frequently help her cousin Trasimon over the garden-wall of an evening.

Dam. I'm glad on't: this is excellent news; I'll put it into a ballad.

Hor. The worst of it is, Nerine, that to make me still more unhappy, this affair will make a noise in the world, and I shall be horribly expos'd: come, let us be gone, I will retire, and hide my tears.

Paf. You have no more commands for me, madam? *[To Hortensia.]* Can I be of any further service to you, sir? Heaven preserve you both! *[To Damis.]*

S C E N E XIII.

HORTENSIA, DAMIS, NERINE.

Hor. Why do I stay in this place? *[Returning.]*

Dam. I ought to be dancing at the ball now.

Hor. He seems thoughtful, but 'tis not on my account.

Dam. I am mistaken, or she looks this way; I'll e'en make up to her.

Hor. I'll avoid him.

Dam. O, stay, Hortensia, can you fly me, can you avoid me? cruel perfidious woman!

Hor. Ungrateful man, leave me to myself, and let me try to hate you.

Dam. That, madam, will be an easy task, thanks to your infidelity.

Hor.

Her 'Tis what I ought to do: 'tis but my duty now, thanks to your injustice.

Dam. And are we met at last, Hortensia, but to quarrel?

Hor. How can Damis talk thus, at the same time affront me, and love another! O, Julia, Julia!

Dam. After your writing me such a letter, madam—

Hor. After your sending back my picture, sir——

Dam. Cou'd I send back your picture? cruel woman!

Hor. Cou'd I ever write a line to you that was not full of love and tenderness? perfidious man!

Dam. Madam, I will consent to leave the court, to give up the posts I enjoy, and all my hopes of future preferment, to be despis'd, and condemn'd by the whole world, if ever I sent you back the picture, the precious treasure which love entrusted to my care.

Hor. And may I never be lov'd by the dear charmer of my soul, if I ever sent you that letter! but here, here, ungrateful man, is the picture your insolence return'd me, the reward of tender friendship, which you despis'd: 'tis here, and can you——

Dam. Ha! here comes Clitander.

SCENE XIV.

HORTENSIA, DAMIS, CLITANDER, NERINE,
PASQUIN.

Dam. My dear marquis, come here; where are you going? He, madam, will unravel all.

Hor. Clitander? why, what does he know of the matter?

Dam. Don't be alarm'd, madam, he is my friend, to whom I have open'd my whole heart: he is my confidant, let him be your's too: you must, indeed you must.

Hor. Let us be gone this moment, Nerine:—O, heav'n! what a ridiculous creature!

SCENE

SCENE XV.

DAMIS, CLITANDER, PASQUIN.

Dam. O, marquis, I am the most unhappy of men ; let me speak to you ; I must follow her : observe me. Stay, Hortensia ; [*To Hortensia.*] nay, then I must after her.

SCENE XVI.

CLITANDER, PASQUIN.

Clit. I don't know what to think of it, Pasquin ; I understood, by what you told me, that they had quarrel'd.

Pas. I thought so too : I'm sure I play'd my part : most certainly they have cause to hate one another ; but, for aught I know, a minute's time may reconcile them again.

Clit. Let us observe which way they turn.

Pas. Hortensia seems as if she was going to her own house.

Clit. Damis follows her close : by his being behind, however, it looks as if she shunn'd him.

Pas. She flies but slowly, and the lover pursues.

Clit. She turns her head back, and Damis talks to her, but to no purpose.

Pas. I fancy not, but Damis stops her often.

Clit. He kneels to her, but she treats him with contempt.

Pas. O, but observe, now she looks tenderly upon him : if so, you're undone.

Clit. She is gone into her own house, and has dismiss'd him : joy and fear, hope and despair, at once surround me ; I can't imagine how it will end.

SCENE

S C E N E XVII.

CLITANDER, DAMIS, PASQUIN.

Dam. O, my dear marquis, I'm glad you're here; for heaven's sake, inform me, what can be the meaning that Hortensia forbids my coming nigh her? how happens it that the picture, which I trusted to you, is now in her hands? answer me.

Clit. You amaze and confound me.

Dam. As for you, fir rascal, there, [*To Pasquin.*] the servant of Hortensia, at least the pretended one, I'll make an end of you this moment.

Pas. Protect me, fir.

[*To Clitander.*

Clit. Well, fir——

[*To Damis.*

Dam. 'Tis in vain——

Clit. Spare this poor fellow, let me intreat you, do.

Dam. What interest have you in him?

Clit. I beg it of you, and seriously.

Dam. Out of regard to you, I will withhold my resentment; but tell me, scoundrel, the whole black contrivance.

Pas. O, fir, 'tis a most mysterious affair; but I'll let you into some surprizing secrets, if you'll promise not to reveal 'em.

Dam. I'll promise nothing, and insist on knowing all.

Pas. You shall, fir, but Hortensia is coming this way, and will overhear us. [*To Clitander*] Come, fir, let us to the masquerade, and there I'll tell you every thing.

S C E N E XVIII.

TRASIMON, NERINE, HORTENSIA, in a domino, with a masque in her hand.

Tra. Take my word for it, Hortensia, this young coxcomb will cover us with shame and ignominy, to shew your letters and your picture about in this public manner:

manner: 'tis intolerable: I saw them myself; but I'll punish the scoundrel as he deserves.

Hor. [*To Nerine.*] Is Julia then so beautiful in his eyes? do you think he's really in love with her?

Tra. No matter whether he is or no: but, if he dishonours you, it concerns me nearly; I know a relation's duty, and will perform it.

Hor. [*To Nerine.*] Do you imagine he is engag'd to Julia? give me your opinion.

Ner. One may know that easily enough from himself.

Hor. O, Nerine, he was excessively indiscreet; I ought to hate, yet perhaps still love him. O, how he wept, and swore he lov'd, that he ador'd me, and that he wou'd conceal our mutual passion!

Tra. There, I'm sure, he promis'd more than he will perform.

Hor. For the last time, however, I mean to try him: he's gone to the masquerade, there I shall be sure to find him: you must dissemble, Nerine: go and tell him that Julia expects him here with impatience: this masque at least will hide, my blushes: the faithless man will take me for Julia: I shall know what he thinks of her, and of myself: on this meeting will depend my choice or my contempt of him. [*To Trafimon.*] You must not be far off: endeavour, if you can, to keep Clitander near you: wait for me here, or hereabouts, and I will call you when there is occasion.

S C E N E XIX.

HORTENSIA alone, in a domino, with a masque in her hand.

At length it is time to fix my wavering affections; under the cover of this masque, and the name of Julia, I shall know whether his indiscretion was owing to excess of love, or vanity; whether I ought to pardon, or to detest him: but here he comes.

SCENE XX.

HORTENSIA masqued, DAMIS.

Dam. [*Not seeing Hortensia.*] This seems to be the favourite spot for ladies to make their assignations in: well, I'll follow the fashion: fashion, in France, determines every thing, regulates precedence, honour, good-breeding, merit, wit, and pleasure.

Hor. The coxcomb!

[*Aside.*

Dam. If this affair of mine cou'd but be known, in two years time the whole court wou'd run mad for love of me: a good setting out here is every thing: then *Ægle*, and *Doris*, and—O there's no counting them, such a groupe, such a sweet prospect! O the pretty creatures——

Hor. Light vain man!

[*Aside.*

Dam. O *Julia*, is it you? I know you in spite of that envious masque: my heart cannot be mistaken; come, come, my dear *Julia*, take off that cruel veil that hides thy beauties from me; do not, in pity do not, conceal those sweet looks, those tender smiles, that were meant to reward that love which they inspir'd; thou art the only woman upon earth whom I adore.

Hor. Let me tell you, *Damis*, you are a stranger to my humour and disposition; I shou'd despise a heart that never felt for any woman but myself; I like my lover shou'd be more fashionable; that twenty young flirts shou'd be hunting after him; that his passion for me shou'd draw him away from a hundred contending beauties; I must have some noble sacrifice offer'd up to me, or I'll never accept of his services: a lover less esteem'd wou'd be of no value, I shou'd despise him.

Dam. I can make you easy on that head, my dear; I have made some pretty good conquests, and perhaps as expeditiously as most men: I believe I can boast of tolerable success that way: many a fine woman has run after me; another man wou'd be vain upon it: I cou'd reckon

reckon up a few of your nice ladies who are not over coy to me.

Hor. Well, but who, who are they?

Dam. Only give the word, my Julia, and I begin the sacrifice: there is, first, the little Isabel; secondly, the lively smart Erminia; then there's Clarice, Ægle, Doris——

Hor. Poor pitiful offerings, I cou'd have a hundred such every day: these will never do: they are lov'd, and turn'd off again twenty times in a week: let me have some respectable names, women of character, such as I may triumph over without a blush: if you cou'd reckon amongst your captives, one, who, before she saw the incomparable Damis, was invulnerable, one, who in all actions paid the strictest regard to decency and decorum, some modest prudent fair, who never felt a weakness but for you, that wou'd be the woman.

Dam. [*Sitting down by her.*] Now then, observe me: I have a mistress who exactly resembles in every feature the picture you have drawn: but you wou'd not have me be so indiscreet as to——

Hor. Not for the world.

Dam. If I was imprudent enough to tell her name, I shou'd call her——Hortensia. Why do you startle at it? I think not of her whilst my Julia's here: she is neither young nor handsome when you are by: besides, there is a certain young Abbé who is very familiar with her; and, between you and I, her cousin Trasimon is too apt to come to her in an evening over the garden wall.

Hor. To join calumny thus to his infidelity, execrable villain! but I must dissemble. [*Aside.*] Pray, Damis, on what footing are you with Hortensia? does she love you?

Dam. O to distraction, that's the truth of it.

Hor. Impudence and falsehood to the highest degree!

[*Aside.*

Dam. 'Tis even so, I assure you, I wou'd not tell you a lye for the world.

Hor. The villain!

[*Aside.*

Dam.

Dam. But what signifies thinking about her? We did not meet here to talk of Hortensia: come, let us rather——

Hor. I can never believe Hortensia wou'd ever have given herself up so totally to you.

Dam. I tell you, I have it under her own hand.

Hor. I don't believe a word of it.

Dam. 'Tis insulting me to doubt it.

Hor. Let me see it then.

Dam. You injure me, madam: there, read, perhaps you know her hand. *[Giving her the letter.]*

Hor. *[Unmasking.]* I do, villain, and know your treachery: at length I have in some measure atoned for my folly, and have luckily recover'd both the picture and the letter, which I had ventur'd to trust in such unworthy hands: 'tis done: now Trasimon, and Clitander, appear.

S C E N E XXI.

HORTENSIA, DAMIS, TRASIMON, CLITANDER.

Hor. *[To Clitander.]* If I have not yet offended you beyond a possibility of pardon; if you can still love Hortensia, my hand, my fortune, and my life are your's.

Clit. O Hortensia, behold at your feet a despairing lover, who receives your kind offer with joy, and transport.

Tra. *[To Damis.]* Did not I tell you, sir, I shou'd bring her to a right way of thinking? this marriage, sir, is my making: now, Damis, fare you well, and henceforth, learn to dissemble better, or never attempt it more.

Dam. Just heaven! for the future how shall I venture to speak at all?





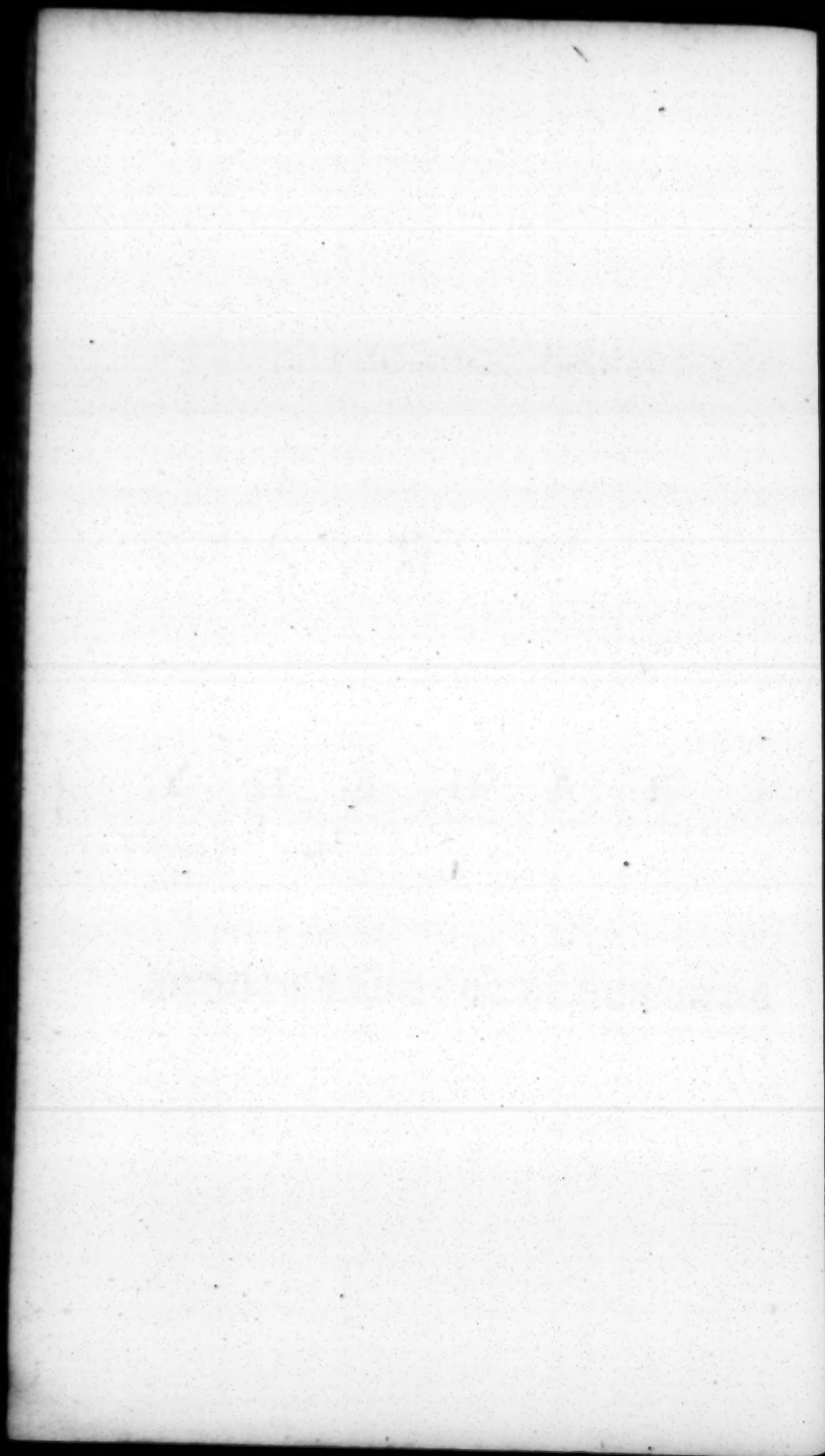
Z A R A.

A

T R A G E D Y.



E 3





A N

EPISTLE DEDICATORY

T O

Mr. FALKNER, an English Merchant,
Since Ambassador at CONSTANTINOPLE,

W I T H

The TRAGEDY of ZARA.

My dear friend,

YOU are an *Englishman*, and I a native of *France*; but all lovers of the fine arts are fellow-citizens: men of taste and virtue have pretty nearly the same principles in every country, and form one general common-weal: it is no longer therefore matter of astonishment to see a *French* tragedy dedicated to an *Englishman*, or an *Italian*, any more than it wou'd have been, in the days of antiquity, for a citizen of *Ephesus*, or of *Athens*, to address his performance to a *Grecian* of some other city: I lay this tragedy before you therefore as my countryman in literature, and my most intimate friend.

I shall, at the same time, have the pleasure of informing my brother *Frenchmen* here in what light traders are look'd upon amongst you, what regard the *English* have

for a profession so essential to the welfare of their kingdom, and the honour which they have to represent their country in parliament, in the rank of legislators: Though trade is despised by our *petits-maitres*, who, you know as well as myself, both in *England* and *France*, are the most contemptible species of being that crawl upon the face of the earth.

My further inducement to correspond with an *Englissman*, rather than any other man, on subjects of literature, arises from your happy freedom of thought, which never fails to inspire me with bolder ideas, and more nervous expression. * ‘Whoever converses with me has, for the time at least, my heart at his disposal; if his sentiments are lively and animated, he inflames me: if he is strong and nervous, he raises and supports me: the courtier, who is all dissimulation, makes me insensibly as affected and constrain’d in my behaviour as himself; but a bold and fearless spirit gives me sentiment and courage: I catch fire from him, just as young painters, brought up under *le Moine* or *Argiliere*, catch the freedom of their master’s pencils, and compose with their spirit: thus *Virgil* admir’d *Homer*, follow’d his steps, and, without being a plagiarist from him, became his rival.’

You need not be apprehensive of my sending you, with this piece, a long apology and vindication of it: I might indeed have told you, why I did not make *Zara* more determin’d to embrace christianity before she knew her father; why she keeps the secret from her lover, &c. but those who have any judgment, or any justice, will see my reasons without my pointing them out; and as for those criticks who are predetermin’d not to believe me,

* The passages which I have inclos’d between asterisks, and mark’d thus, ‘ ’ are, in the original, written in a familiar kind of verses, consisting of eight syllables, which Mr. *Voltaire* is, in most of his letters, fond of intermingling with his prose: the reader will easily perceive that, however agreeable those rhimes might be to a *French* ear, both the subject and stile, in the greater part of them, are of such a nature, as not to admit of an *English* poetical translation.

me, it wou'd be lost labour to give them any reasons at all.

All I can boast of is, that the piece is tolerably simple; a perfection, in my opinion, that is not to be despis'd.

' This happy simplicity was one of the distinguishing beauties of learned antiquity: 'tis pity you *Englishmen* don't introduce this novelty on your stage, which is so fill'd with horror, gibbets, and murders: put more truth into your dramatic performances, and more noble images: *Addison* has endeavour'd at it: he was the poet of the wise, but he was too stiff: and, in his boasted *Cato*, the two girls are really very insipid characters: imitate from the great *Addison* only what is good; polish a little the rude manners of your wild muse; write for all times, and all ages, for fame, and for posterity, and transfuse into your works the simplicity of your manners.'

But I wou'd not have your *English* poets imagine, that I mean to give them *Zara* as a model: I preach simplicity to them, and easy numbers, but I wou'd not be thought to set up for the saint of my own sermon: if *Zara* has met with success, I owe it not so much to the merit of the performance, as to the tenderness of the love scenes, which I was wise enough to execute as well as I possibly cou'd: in this I flatter'd the taste of my audience; and he is generally sure to succeed, who talks more to the passions of men than to their reason: if we are ever so good christians, we must have a little love besides: and I am satisfy'd the great *Corneille* was much in the right of it, not to confine himself, in his *Polyeucte*, merely to the breaking of the statues of Jupiter by the new converts: for such is the depravity of human kind, that perhaps,

' The pious soul of *Polyeucte* wou'd have but little impression on the audience, and even the christian verses he declaims wou'd have been receiv'd with contempt, if it had not been for his wife's passion for her favourite heathen, who was certainly more worthy of her love than the good devotee her husband.' Almost the same accident happen'd to *Zara*: all my friends, who frequent

the theatre, assur'd me, that if she had been only converted, she wou'd not have been half so interesting : but she was in love with the most perfect religion in the world, and that has made her fortune : I cou'd not however expect to escape censure.

' Many an inexorable critic has carp'd at and slash'd me, and many a remorseless jester has pretended that I only filch'd an improbable Romance, which I had not the sense to improve ; that I have lamed and spoil'd the subject ; that the catastrophe is unnatural : they even prognosticated the dreadful hiss, with which a disgusted public salutes a miserable poet : but I despis'd their censures, and risk'd my play upon the stage ; the public was more favourable than they expected, or I deserv'd ; instead of hisses, it was receiv'd with shouts : tears flow'd almost from every eye : but I am not puff'd up with my success, I assure you I am no stranger to all its faults. I know very well it is absolutely indisputable, that before we can make a perfect work, we must sell ourselves to the devil, which was what I did not chuse to do.'

I do not flatter myself that the *English* will do *Zara* the same honour they have done to *Brutus*, a † translation of which has been play'd at *London* : they tell us here, that you have neither devotion enough to be affected by old *Lusignan*, nor tenderness to feel for *Zara* : you love a conspiracy better than an intrigue : upon your stage, they say the word, country, is sure of getting a clap, and so is, love, upon ours ; but to say the truth, you have as much love in your tragedies as we have : if you have not the reputation of being tender, it is not that your stage heroes are not in love, but that they seldom express their passion naturally : our lovers talk like lovers ; yours like poets.

But if the *French* are your superiors in gallantry, there are many things which, in return, we may borrow of you : to the *English* theatre I am indebted for the liberty

† Mr. Voltaire was mistaken in this particular, as no translation of his *Brutus* was ever exhibited on the *English* stage.

ty which I have taken of bringing the names of our kings and antient families upon the stage : a novelty of this kind may perhaps be the means of introducing amongst us a species of tragedy hitherto unknown, and which we seem to want. Some happy geniuses will, I make no doubt, rise up, who will bring to perfection that idea, of which *Zara* is but a slight sketch : as long as literature meets with protection in *France*, we shall always have writers enough : nature every day forms men of talents and abilities ; we have nothing to do but to encourage and employ them : but if those which distinguish themselves are not supported by some honourable recompence, and by the still more pleasing charm of admiration, all the fine arts must soon perish, even though so many edifices have been rais'd to shelter and protect them : the noble plantation of *Lewis XIV.* wou'd die away for want of culture : the public might still have taste, but there wou'd be no eminent masters : the sculptor in his academy wou'd see a number of indifferent pupils about him, but never have the ambition to imitate *Girardon* and *Pujet* : the painter wou'd rest satisfy'd with excelling his cotemporaries, but wou'd never think of rivalling *Poussin* : may the successors of *Lewis XIV.* always follow the example of that great monarch, who inspir'd every artist with emulation ! encourag'd at the same time a *Racine* and a *Van-Robais* : he carry'd our commerce and our glory to the furthest part of the globe, and extended his bounty to foreigners of all nations, who were astonish'd at the same and rewards which our court bestow'd upon them : wherever merit appear'd, it found a patron in *Lewis XIV.*

Where'er that bounteous star its influence shed,
 Fair merit rais'd her long-declining head ;
 His royal hand spread honours, wealth, and fame,
 Then *Viviani*, then *Cassini* came :
Newton refus'd a gift from *France's* throne,
 Or *Newton* too, thou know'st, had been our own :
 These are the deeds that raise our *Gallia's* fame,
 These, *Louis*, will immortalize thy name,
 And truly make thee, what thou wert design'd,
 The universal monarch of mankind.

You

You have no foundations equal to the munificent donations of our kings; but then your people supplies the want of them: you don't stand in need of royal favour to honour and reward superior talents of every kind. *Steel* and *Vanbrugh* were comedy writers, and at the same time members of parliament: the primacy given to *Dr. Tillotson*, *Newton* honour'd with an important trust, *Prior* made an ambassador, and *Addison* a minister of state, are but the common and ordinary consequences of the regard which you pay to merit, and to great men: you heap riches on them whilst they live, and erect monuments and statues to them after their death: even your celebrated actresses have places in your churches, near the great poets.

' Your *Oldfield*, and her predecessor, *Bracegirdle*, in consideration of their having been so agreeable to the public when in their prime, their course finish'd, were, by the consent of your whole nation, honour'd with a pompous funeral, and their remains carry'd under a velvet pall, and lodg'd in your church with the greatest magnificence: their spirits, no doubt, are still proud of it, and boast of the honour in the shades below: whilst the divine *Moliere*, who was far more worthy of it, cou'd scarce obtain leave to sleep in a church-yard; and the amiable *Le Couvreur*, whose eyes I clos'd, cou'd not even so much as obtain two wax-tapers and a coffin; *Monf. de Laubiniere*, out of charity, carry'd away her corpse by night in a hackney-coach to the banks of the river: do you not even now see the god of love breaking his arrows in a rage, and *Melpomene* in tears, banishing herself from that ungrateful place which *le Couvreur* had so long adorn'd?

But every thing, in these our days, conspires to reduce *France* to that state of barbarism from which *Louis XIV.* and cardinal *Richlieu* had deliver'd her: a curse on that policy which knows not the value of the fine arts! the world is peopled with nations as powerful as our own; how happens it then that we look on them with so little esteem? For the same reason perhaps that we despise the company of a rich man, whose mind is tasteless and uncultivated: do not imagine that this empire of wit, this
glory

glory of being the universal model for mankind, is a trifling distinction, it is the infallible mark of the grandeur of a kingdom : under the greatest princes the arts have always flourish'd, and their decay is often succeeded by that of the state itself : history will supply us with ample proofs of it ; but this wou'd lead me too far out of my subject : I shall finish this letter, which is already too long, with a little performance, which naturally demands a place at the head of this tragedy : an epistle, in verse, to the actress who play'd the part of *Zara* ; I owe her at least this compliment for the manner in which she acquitted herself on that occasion.

' For the prophet of *Mecca* never had *Greek* or *Arabian* in his seraglio so beautiful or so genteel : her black eyes, so finely arch'd and full of tenderness, with her excellent voice, mien and carriage, defended my performance against every auditor that had a mind to be troublesome : but when the reader catches me in his closet, all my honour, I fear, will be lost.'

Adieu, my dear friend, continue to cultivate philosophy and the Belles-lettres, without forgetting to send your ships to the *Levant*.

I have the honour to remain, &c.

A SECOND



A

SECOND LETTER

T O

Mr. F A L K N E R,

Then Ambassador at CONSTANTINOPLE,

From the Second Edition of the Tragedy of ZARA.

My dear friend.

FOR your new dignity of ambassador only makes our friendship more respectable, and shall not prevent my making use of a title even more sacred than that of minister; the name of *Friend* is much above that of, *your Excellency*. I now dedicate to the ambassador of a great king, and a free nation, what I had before address'd to a plain citizen, and an English merchant: those who know how much commerce is respected in your country, must know that a tradesman is there sometimes a legislator, a good officer, and a public minister.

Some ridiculous people, who had fall'n in with the fashion, of paying respect to nothing but nobility, thought proper to laugh at the novelty of a dedication to a man who had nothing but merit to recommend him: who took the liberty, on a stage sacred to calumny and bad taste, to insult the author of that dedication,

cation, and to * reproach the gentleman to whom it was address'd for being a merchant: but we must not, sir, impute to our whole nation an affront so gross and illiberal, that people, ever so unciviliz'd, wou'd have been asham'd to commit. The magistrates of our police, who are constantly employ'd in rectifying abuses of this kind, were, to the last degree, surpriz'd at it: but the contempt and ignominy with which the public have branded the acknowledg'd author of this indignity, are, I hope, a fresh proof of *French* politeness: those virtues, which, form the character of a whole people, are often contradicted, and, as it were, call'd in question by the vices of an individual: there were some voluptuaries, we know, even at *Lacedæmon*; there have been low and foolish fellows in England; men without taste, or good breeding, at *Athens*; and so there are in *Paris*.

You will, I hope, forget them, sir, as they are forgotten by the world, and receive the second mark of my respects: they are due to you still more than they were before, as this tragedy has made its appearance at *London*. It has been translated, and acted with so much success, and the author of it spoken of with so much regard and politeness, that I ought to return my public thanks to the whole nation.

I do not know how to acquit my obligations to you by any other means, than acquainting my countrymen here with the particulars of the translation, and representation of *Zara* on the *English* stage.

Mr. *Hill*, a man of letters, and one who seems to understand the theatre better than any *English* author, did me the honour to translate this piece, with the design of introducing something new on your stage, both with regard to the manner of writing tragedies, and of repeating them. I shall speak, by and by, of the representation.

The

* Mr. Falkner, and some other gentlemen of character, were affronted at the *Theatre Italienne* at Paris, by some injurious reflections thrown out upon them in a contemptible farce exhibited there, which was hiss'd by the audience.

The art of declaiming was for a long time amongst you intirely out of nature ; most of your tragic actors expressed themselves more like poets seized with rapturous enthusiasm, than like men inspired by a real passion. Several of your comedians were even more intolerable, they roared out their verses with an impetuous fury, that was no more like the natural tone, than convulsions and distortions are to an easy and noble carriage. This air of riot and tumult seemed intirely foreign to your nation, which is naturally sober and grave, even to such a degree, as frequently to appear cold and unanimated in the eye of a stranger. Your preachers never indulge themselves in a declamatory tone, and you would laugh at a pleader at the bar, who should work himself up into a passion : the players were the only outrageous set of people in the kingdom. Our actors and actresses also, particularly the latter, were guilty of this for many years. *M. le Couvreur* was the first who broke them of it : thus an *Italian* writer, a man of great sense and parts, speaks of her :

La legiadra Couvreur sola non trotta .
 Per quella strade dove i suoi compagni
 Van di galoppo tutti quanti in frotta,
 Se auvien ch'ella pianga, o che si lagni
 Senza quelli urli spaventosi loro
 Ti muove si che in pianger l'accompagni.

The same change which *le Couvreur* effected on our stage, *Mrs. Cibber* brought about on yours, in the part of *Zara* : how astonishing it is, that in every art it should be so long before we arrive at the simple and the natural !

A novelty that must appear still more extraordinary to a *Frenchman* is, that a gentleman of your country *,
 a man

* This gentleman whom *Mr. Voltaire* calls a man of rank and fortune, and a person of condition, who was so condescending, was nothing more than a nephew of *Aaron Hill's*, who had more passion than genius for the stage, and play'd the part of *Osman* so execrably, that he was hiss'd off, and never, I believe, made his appearance there afterwards.

a man of rank and fortune, should condescend to play the part of *Osman*. It was an interesting circumstance to see the two principal characters represented, one by a person of condition, and the other by a young actress not above eighteen years of age, who had never repeated a line before in her life. This instance of a gentleman's exercising his talents for declamation, is not singular amongst you; it is perhaps more surprising that we should wonder at it: we ought certainly to reflect, that every thing in this world depends upon custom and opinion: the court of *France* have danc'd on the stage with the actors of the opera, and we thought there was nothing strange in it, but that the fashion of this kind of entertainment should be discontinued. Why should it be more extraordinary for people to write than to dance in public? Is there any difference between these two arts, except that the one is as much above the other, as the perfections of the mind are superior to those of the body; I have said it before, and I say so still, none of the polite arts are contemptible; and to be ashamed of talents of any kind, is of all things the most shameful.

I come now to the translation of *Zara*, and the change which has been made amongst you with regard to the drama.

You had a strange custom, which even Mr. *Addison*, the chastest of your writers, adopted, so often does custom get the better of sense and reason; I mean, the ridiculous custom of finishing every act by verses in a different taste from the rest of the piece, which verses usually consisted of a simile. *Phædra*, as she leaves the stage, compares herself to a bitch; *Cato* to a rock, and *Cleopatra* to children that cry themselves asleep. The translator of *Zara* was the first who dared to maintain the rights of nature against a custom so directly opposite to her†. He proscrib'd this custom, well knowing that
passion

† A person unacquainted with the *English* stage would naturally imagine, from Mr. *Voltaire's* character of *Aaron Hill*, that he was one of the greatest poets we ever had; and yet, in reality, nothing
can

passion should always speak its own language, and that the poet should disappear, to make room for the hero.

Upon this principle he has translated plainly, and without any unnecessary ornaments, all the simple verses of the piece, which must have been entirely spoiled by an endeavour to render them beautiful, such as,

On ne peut desirer ce qu'on ne connoit pas.

J' eusse été pres du Gange esclave des faux dieux
Chretienne dans Paris, Musulmane en ces lieux.

Mais Orosmane m'aime, & j'ai tout oublié.

Non, la reconnoissance est un foible retour
Un tribut offensant, trop peu fait pour l'amour.

Je me croirois hai d'être aimé foiblement.

Je veux avec excès vous aimer & vous plaire

L'art ne'st pas fait pour toi, tu n'en a pas besoin.

L'art le plus innocent tient de la perfidie.

All the verses that are in this fine taste of simplicity, are render'd word for word into *English*: they might very easily have been adorn'd, but the translator judg'd in a different manner from several of my countrymen; he liked the verses, and retained therefore all the simplicity of them; the stile indeed ought always to be agreeable to the subject; *Alzira*, *Brutus*, and *Zara*, for example, required three different kinds of versification: if *Berenice* complained of *Titus*, and *Ariadne* of *Theseus*, in the stile of *Cinna*, neither *Berenice* nor *Ariadne* would please or affect us; we can never talk well of love, if
we

can be more labour'd, stiff, and obscure, than his stile and expression in every one of his pieces, though he was not without taste, and sentiment. But if Mr. Voltaire had not been sway'd more by prejudice than judgment, he would not so rashly have condemn'd our theatre, nor placed *Addison* at the head of our dramatic writers.

we search after any other ornaments but truth and simplicity.

This is not the place to examine whether it be right or wrong, to put so much love into our dramatic performances: I will even allow it to be a fault, but it is a fault which will always be universal; nor do I know what name to give that fault, which is the delight of all mankind: one thing I am satisfy'd of, that the *French* have succeeded better in it than all other nations, antient and modern, put together: love appears on our stage with more decorum, more delicacy, and truth, than we meet with on any other; and the reason is, because of all nations the *French* are best acquainted with society: the perpetual commerce and intercourse of the two sexes, carry'd on with so much vivacity and good breeding, has introduc'd amongst us a politeness unknown to all the world but ourselves.

Society principally depends on the fair sex: all those nations who are so unhappy as to confine their women are unsociable: the austerity of your manners, your political quarrels, and religious wars, that render'd you savage and barbarous, depriv'd you, even down to the age of *Charles II.* of the pleasures of society, even in the bosom of liberty: the poets therefore, neither of your country, nor of any other, knew any thing of the manner in which love ought to be treated.

Good comedy was utterly unknown amongst us till the days of *Moliere*; as was the art of expressing our sentiments with delicacy till those of *Racine*, because society had not attain'd to any degree of perfection before that time: a poet cannot paint, in his closet, manners which he has never seen; and wou'd sooner write a hundred odes and epistles than one scene where nature must speak: your *Dryden*, who was in other respects a great genius, put into the mouth of his heroes in love, either high flown strains of rhetorical flourish, or something indecent, two things equally opposite to tenderness.

If Mr. *Racine* makes *Titus* say,

Depuis cinq ans entiers chaque jour je la vois
Et croi toujours la voir pour la premiere fois.

Your

Your *Dryden* makes *Antony* say,

—————how I lov'd,
 Witness ye days and nights, and all ye hours,
 That danc'd away with down upon your feet,
 As all your business were to count my love,
 One day past by, and nothing saw but love ;
 Another came, and still 'twas only love :
 The suns were weary'd out with looking on,
 And I untir'd with loving—————

It is very difficult to conceive that *Antony* shou'd ever really talk thus to *Cleopatra*. In the same play, *Cleopatra* speaks thus to *Antony*:

Come to me, come, my soldier, to my arms,
 You've been too long away from my embraces ;:
 But when I have you fast, and all my own,
 With broken murmurs, and with amorous sighs,
 I'll say, you were unkind, and punish you,
 And mark you red with many an eager kiss.

It is not improbable but that *Cleopatra* might frequently talk thus, but indecencies of this kind are not to be represented before a respectable audience: some of your countrymen may perhaps say, this is pure nature; but we may tell them in answer, that if it be so, it is that nature which ought carefully to be conceal'd: it shews but little knowledge of human nature, to imagine that we can please the more by presenting these licentious images; on the contrary, it is shutting up the avenues to true pleasure: where every thing is at once discover'd, we are disgusted; there remains no more to look for or desire; and in our pursuit of pleasure we meet with languor and satiety: this is the reason why those, who are truly qualify'd for society, taste pleasures far more exquisite than grosser appetites can have any idea of: the spectators, in this case, are like lovers who are satiated by too quick possession: those ideas which, when brought too close, wou'd make us blush, shou'd be seen as it were thro' a cloud. It is this veil to which, to a right mind, they

they are indebted for all their charms: there is no pleasure without decorum †. The *French* are certainly better acquainted with this than any other nation upon earth; not because they are *without genius and spirit*, as the unequal and impetuous *Dryden* has ridiculouſly aſſerted; but becauſe, ever ſince the regency of *Anne of Austria*, they have been the moſt ſociable and the moſt poliſh'd people in the univerſe: and this politeneſs is not an arbitrary thing, like what they call civility, but a law of nature, which they have happily cultivated far beyond any other nation.

The tranſlator of *Zara* has, almoſt throughout his whole piece, ſtrictly obſerv'd thoſe decencies of the ſtage which are common to us both; but there are, at the ſame time, ſome places where he has intirely adher'd to antient cuſtoms.

For inſtance, when in the *Engliſh* piece *Oſman* comes to tell *Zara* that he can no longer love her, ſhe answers him by *rolling upon the ground*: the Sultan is not mov'd at ſeeing her in this ridiculous poſture of deſpair, and yet the moment after is aſtoniſh'd at *Zara's* weeping, and cries out,

Zara, thou weep'ſt.

He ſhou'd have ſaid to her before,

Zara, thou roll'ſt upon the ground.

Inſomuch that thoſe three words, *Zara*, *thou weep'ſt*, which have ſo fine an effect on our ſtage, have none on yours, becauſe they were diſplac'd: thoſe familiar and ſimple expreſſions derive all their power from the manner in which they are introduc'd. *My lord*, *you change countenance*, is nothing of itſelf: but when theſe words are pronounc'd by *Mithridates*, we ſhudder at them.

To

† There is no expreſſion in the *Engliſh* language which fully comprehends the meaning of the *French* word *Bienſéance*, which notwithstanding, unfortunately for a tranſlator, being a favourite phraſe, recurs in almoſt every page: as does alſo the word *Naiivete*, for which we have no term in all reſpects correſpondent to it.

To say nothing but what we ought to say, and that in the manner in which it ought to be said, is a point of perfection which the *French*, myself excepted, have come nigher to than the writers of other countries: on this subject we have, I think, a right to dictate to them: you can teach us perhaps greater and more useful things, we ought to acknowledge it. The *French*, who have wrote against sir *Isaac Newton's* discoveries, with regard to light and colours, are asham'd of it; those who oppose his system of gravitation will soon be still more so.

You ought to submit to our rules of the stage, as we submit to your philosophy: we have made as good experiments on the human heart, as you have in physics: the art of pleasing seems to be the art of *Frenchmen*; the art of thinking is all your own. Happy are those, sir, who, like you, can unite them.

I am, SIR, &c.



ADVER.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THOSE who are fond of literary anecdotes may perhaps be glad to know how this piece came into the world. Several ladies had censured the author for not putting love enough into his tragedies ; his answer to them was, that he did not think tragedy the proper place for it ; but since it was absolutely necessary that heroes shou'd be in love, he wou'd make his like those of other people. This piece was finish'd in eighteen days : it is call'd at Paris, the **CHRISTIAN TRAGEDY**, and often play'd in the room of * *Polyeucte*.

† A sacred Tragedy by Peter Corneille, and one of his best performances.

DAR-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

OSMAN, Sultan of Jerusalem.

LUSIGNAN, A Prince of the Blood of the ancient Kings of Jerusalem.

ZARA, } Slaves of the Sultan.

FATIMA, }

NERESTAN, } French Gentlemen.

CHATILLON, }

ORASMIN, } Officers of the Sultan.

MELIDOR, }

A SLAVE,

ATTENDANTS.

SCENE, the Seraglio at Jerusalem.



Z A R A.

A

T R G E D Y.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

Z A R A, F A T I M A.

Fat. **I** LITTLE thought to see the lovely Zara,
In all the pride of youth and beauty, thus
Calm and resign'd submitting to her fate :
What sweet delusive hope hath pierc'd the cloud
Of grief that hung upon thee, and reviv'd
Thy drooping heart? This peace of mind hath giv'n
New lustre to thy charms : no longer now
Thy eyes are bath'd in tears, no longer seek
Those blissful climes where brave Nerestan promis'd
To guide our steps ; thou talk'st not, as of late
We heard thee, of those seats of happiness
Where women reign, by willing slaves ador'd,
The queens, the idols of a polish'd people,
Tho' free yet chaste, and wise tho' unrestrain'd,
For social converse fit, and not to fear
Indebted for their virtue : sigh'st thou, Zara,
No more for this gay land of liberty ?

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F

See'tt

See'st thou within these solitary walls
 Aught that is lovely ? is the name of slave
 So grateful now, that to the banks of Seine
 Thou woud'st prefer the gloomy Solyma ?

Zara. We cannot wish for joys we never knew :
 'Twas heav'n's supreme degree to fix us here ;
 Custom hath made restraint familiar to me :
 I look not now beyond the narrow bounds
 Of this seraglio ; ev'ry hour it grows
 More pleasing to me, and the world beside
 Is lost to Zara : to the noble Osman
 I yield myself, to live beneath his pow'r ;
 To honour and obey my royal master,
 Is my soul's utmost hope, and its ambition,
 All else is but a dream.

Fat. Hast thou forgot
 The kind Nereestan, he whose gen'rous friendship
 Promis'd so oft to free us from the yoke
 Of bondage ? how did we admire his virtues,
 His matchless valour, and intrepid zeal !
 The glory he acquir'd beneath the walls
 Of Damas, where so many Christians fell
 By Osman's mighty hand ! the conqu'ror then,
 Thou may'st remember, pity'd his brave foe,
 And, on his word, permitted him to leave
 The banks of Jordan ; we expect him still
 To pay the ransom of our liberty,
 And set us free : must all our hopes be vain ?

Zara. Perhaps his promise might exceed his pow'r ;
 Two years are past, and yet he's not return'd :
 Alas ! my Fatima, a captive stranger,
 To gain his liberty, might promise more
 Than he cou'd e'er perform : he talk'd, thou know'st,
 Of bringing ransom for ten Christian slaves,
 Wou'd break their fetters, or resume his own :
 I was too credulous, and much admir'd
 His forward zeal, but I shall think no more on't.

Fat. If yet he shou'd be faithful, and return
 To keep his plighted faith, then wou'dst thou not—

Zara. It is not as it was, my Fatima,
 The time is past.

Fat.

Fat. What say'st thou ?

Zara. I'll not hide

The secret from my friend ; perhaps the Sultan
May yet conceal it, but thy *Zara's* heart

With safety may repose on *Fatima* :

Know then, some three months since, when thou wert
absent,

Remov'd with other slaves from Jordan's banks,

Kind heav'n, to put a period to our woes,

Rais'd up a pow'rful friend—the mighty *Osman*—

Fat. Well, what of *Osman* ?

Zara. He, the Sultan's self,

The Christian's haughty conqu'ror, is the slave

Of *Zara* ; yes, he loves me, *Fatima* ;

Nay, blush not, (for I understand thee well)

Think not I mean to stain my spotless honor,

Or stoop to be the mistress of a tyrant ;

That I will ever hazard the quick change

Of transitory passion ; no, my friend,

I am not so far lost to modesty,

And native pride, as to forget myself ;

Rather than fall so low I wou'd embrace

The milder fate of slavery and of death ;

But I shall more astonish thee : for know,

I have subdued his haughty soul to love

Most pure, and most refin'd : amidst the croud

Of rival beauties, that contend for *Osman*,

I, I alone have fix'd his wand'ring heart,

And Hymen soon, in spite of all their deep

And dark intrigues, shall make the Sultan mine.

Fat. It is a conquest worthy of thy charms,

And of thy virtues : I am much surpris'd,

But more delighted ; may thy happiness

Be perfect ! I shall rank myself with joy

Amongst thy subjects.

Zara. Be my equal still,

And share my fortune ; royalty, with thee

Divided, will make *Zara* doubly happy.

Fat. Pleas'd with thy choice, long may indulgent

Smile on thy nuptial bed ; may never grief [heav'n

Intrude to poison the sweet cup of grandeur,

By us call'd happiness ! alas, how little
Doth it deserve the name ! but tell me, Zara,
Art thou at ease, and feel'st thou nought within
To check thy joys ? hast thou forgot that once
Thou wert a Christian ?

Zara. Ha ! what say'st thou ? why
Woud'st thou recal my sorrows, Fatima ?
Alas ! I know not who or what I am,
Not ev'n who gave me birth.

Fat. Nereestan oft
Hath said, thou wert the daughter of a Christian ;
The cross, which in thy infant years adorn'd thee,
Confirms it ; still that sacred pledge remains
Perhaps but to remind thee of the faith,
Which thou hast quitted.

Zara I've no other proof ;
Shall that alone persuade me to embrace
A faith, detested by the man I love ?
Our thoughts, our manners, our religion, all
Are form'd by custom, and the pow'rful bent
Of early years : born on the banks of Ganges
Zara had worship'd Pagan deities ;
At Paris I had been a Christian ; here
I am a happy Mussulman : we know
But what we learn ; th' instructing parent's hand
Graves in our feeble hearts those characters,
Which time retouches, and examples fix
So deeply in the mind, that nought but God
Can e'er efface : but thou wert hither brought
A captive at an age, when reason join'd
To sage experience had inform'd thy soul,
And well-confirm'd its faith : for me, a slave
Ev'n from my cradle to the Saracens,
Too late the Christian light broke in upon me ;
Yet far from wishing ill to laws so pure,
Spite of myself, I own to thee, that cross,
Whene'er I look'd upon it, fill'd my soul
With reverential awe, and oft in secret
Have I invok'd its holy aid, ere Osman
Possess'd my heart : thine is a noble faith ;
I honour much those charitable laws,

Which

Which old Nereſtan many a time hath told me
 Wou'd wipe off ev'ry tear, and make mankind
 One ſweet united family of love :
 A Chriſtian muſt be happy.

Fat. Wherefore then
 Wou'd'ſt thou become their moſt invet'rate foe,
 And wed their proud oppreſſor ?

Zara. Wou'd'ſt thou have me
 Refuſe ſo fair a preſent as the heart
 Of Oſman ? No : I will confeſs my weakneſs ;
 But for the Sultan, Zara had long ſince
 Embraced thy faith, and been, like thee, a Chriſtian :
 But Oſman loves me, and 'tis all forgotten :
 My ev'ry thought, my ev'ry hope is fix'd
 On him alone, and my enraptur'd ſoul
 Can dwell on nought but Oſman : O, my friend,
 Think on his lovely form, and graceful mind,
 His noble deeds, his glory, and renown :
 The crown he offers is not worth my care ;
 The poor return of gratitude wou'd ill
 Repay his paſſion ; love wou'd ſpurn the gift :
 'Tis not to Oſman's throne, but Oſman's ſelf,
 That I aſpire ; perhaps I am to blame ;
 But truſt me, Fatima, if heav'n had doom'd him
 To Zara's fate, if he were now, like me,
 A wretched ſlave, and I on Syria's throne,
 Or love deceives me much, or I ſhou'd ſtoop
 With joy, and raiſe him up to me and empire.

Fat. But hark, they come this way ; perhaps 'tis Oſ-
 man.

Zara. It is ; it muſt be he ; my flutt'ring heart
 Speaks his arrival ; for theſe two long days
 He hath been abſent, but propitious love
 Reſtores him to my wiſhes.

S C E N E II.

OSMAN, ZARA, FATIMA.

Osman. Virtuous Zara,
 Ere Hymen join our hands, permit me here
 To pour forth all my honest heart before you :
 I follow not our eastern monarchs laws,
 Nor act by their example ; well I know
 How wide a field is left by Mahomet
 For luxury to range in, that at pleasure
 I might command a crowd of kneeling slaves,
 Receive their incense, and return their love ;
 From the Seraglio's peaceful seats deal forth
 My laws, and in the arms of indolence
 Govern my kingdom ; but that well I know
 How sloth deludes us, tempting are her charms
 But fatal is their end : a hundred kings
 Have I beheld, her tributary slaves,
 Our prophet's most unworthy successors ;
 Caliphs that trembled mid't the splendid pomp
 Of visionary pow'r, and only held
 The name of kings, who might have liv'd the lords
 Of all mankind, the conqu'rors of the world,
 Had they but been, like their great ancestors,
 The masters of themselves : then Solyma
 And Syria fell beneath the valiant Bouillon,
 But heav'n, to chastise the impious foe,
 Uprais'd the arm of mighty Saladin :
 My father conquer'd Jordan, and to him,
 Unequal to the weight of empire, next
 Succeeded Osman, the disputed lord
 Of a weak kingdom : whilst the haughty Christians,
 Thirsting for blood, thick from the western coast,
 Pour in upon me ; whilst the voice of war
 And the shrill trumpet heard on ev'ry side,
 Call us to arms, shall Osman waste his hours
 In the loose dalliance of a soft seraglio ?
 No, Zara, love, and glory, bear me witness,

To

To thee alone I swear eternal truth,
To take thee for my mistress, and my wife ;
To live thy friend, thy lover, and thy husband ;
Zara alone shall with the toils of war
Divide my heart : think not I mean to trust
Thy honour to our savage Asian guards,
Those shameless pandars to the lawless pleasures
Of their imperious masters ; I esteem
As well as love thee, and to Zara's self,
Its fittest guard, commit my Zara's virtue.
Thou know'st my heart, on thee alone thou seest
Osman has plac'd his hopes of happiness ;
I need not add how wretched it wou'd make
My future life, should'st thou repay my fondness
With the poor cold return of gratitude ;
I love thee, Zara, yes, with rapture love thee,
And hope to find in thee an equal flame :
I own, whate'er the heart of Osman seeks,
It seeks with ardour ; I shou'd think you hated,
Did you not love me with excess of passion :
Such is my nature ; if it suits with thine,
I am thy husband, but on this condition,
And only this, if marriage did not make
Thee happy, I were most supremely wretched.

Zara. Wretched, my lord ? O if thy happiness
Depends on Zara's truth, and Zara's love,
Never was mortal half so blest as Osman.
Yes ; the fond lover, and the tender wife,
All thou can'st wish for, shalt thou find in Zara ;
For thou hast rais'd her far above her sex,
Above her hopes ; O what excess of bliss
To hold my life, my happiness from thee,
Such envy'd bounties from the man I love,
'To be the work of thy creating hand !
But if among the croud of rival hearts
Thy partial favour has selected Zara's,
O if thy choice——

S C E N E III.

OSMAN, ZARA, FATIMA, ORASMIN.

Oraf. My lord, that Christian slave,
Who, on his promise giv'n, had thy permission
To visit France, is thence return'd, and begs
An audience.

Ofm. Let him enter.

Fat. Gracious heav'n !

Ofm. Why comes he not ?

Oraf. My lord, he waits without ;
I did not think a Christian might approach
Your royal presence in this sacred place.

Ofm. In ev'ry place access is free to Osman ;
I hate our eastern policy, that hides
Its tyrants from the public eye, to screen
Oppression : give him entrance.

S C E N E IV.

OSMAN, ZARA, FATIMA, ORASMIN, NERESTAN.

Ner. Gen'rous Sultan,
Whose virtues ev'n thy Christian foes admire,
I come, as bound in honour, to discharge
My vows, and bring with me the promis'd ransom
Of beauteous Zara, the fair Selima,
And ten more Christian pris'ners ; I have done
My duty to the captives, do thou thine,
And set them free ; I have bestow'd on them
My little all, and nought remains for me
But noble poverty ; Nerestan still
Must be thy slave ; I have preserv'd my honour,
Unblemish'd, and fulfill'd my sacred word.

Ofm. Christian, thy virtue merits my best praise ;
But think not Osman e'er will be surpass'd

In

In generosity ; receive thy freedom,
 Take back thy treasures ; take my bounty with them ;
 I promis'd thee ten Christian slaves, I'll give thee
 A hundred more, demand 'em when thou wilt ;
 Let 'em depart, and teach their countrymen,
 That ev'n in Syria's plains some virtues dwell ;
 Thence let them judge, if they or Osman best
 Deserve to reign in Solyma ; but know,
 Old Lusignan must still remain a captive ;
 It were not safe to give him liberty ;
 Sprung from the royal blood of France, he claims
 A right to govern here, and that alone
 Condemns him to perpetual slavery,
 To groan in chains, and never more behold
 The light of day : I pity him, and yet
 It must be so ; cruel necessity
 Compels me to this rigor : and for Zara,
 She must remain with me ; not all thy gold
 Can purchase her ; not the whole race of Christians,
 With all their kings, shall ever force her from me :
 You may depart.

Fat. What do I hear ?

Ner. My lord,

She is a Christian born ; I have your word,
 Your honour, and her own, that she shou'd go
 When I return'd : poor Lusignan ! cou'd he
 Offend thee ? wherefore wou'd'st thou——

Osman. Christian, hence :

It is my will ; therefore no more : thy pride
 Offends me ; go, and ere to-morrow's sun
 Shines on this palace, leave my kingdom.

Fat. Heav'n,

Assist us now !

Osman. Go, Zara, and assume

Thy empire o'er my palace ; there command
 As my Sultana ; I will hence, and give
 My orders for our nuptials.

S C E N E V.

OSMAN, ORASMIN.

Os. Did'st thou mark,
Oramin, that presumptuous slave; he sigh'd,
And fix'd his eyes upon her.

Oraf. O my lord,
Beware of jealousy.

Os. Jealous! say'st thou?
Think'st thou the pride of Osman will descend
So low! to love as if I hated her?
Suspicion but provokes the crime it fears;
Zara is truth itself; and, O Orasmin,
I love her to idolatry; if e'er
I cou'd be jealous—if my foolish heart—
But I will think no more on't: let my soul
Dwell on the sweet idea of her charms:
Haste, my Orasmin, and get all things ready
For the dear happy moment that unites
Thy sov'reign to the object of his wishes:
One hour I will devote to public cares,
The rest shall all be giv'n to love and Zara.



A C T II. S C E N E I.

NERESTAN, CHATILLON.

Cha. **J**OY to our great deliverer, the brave,
The generous Nerestan, sent by heav'n
To save thy fellow Christians! O come forth,
Appear amongst us, and receive the tribute
Due to thy virtues; let the happy few,
Whom thou has blest with freedom, clasp thy knees,
And kiss thy gracious hand: they croud to see

Their

Their benefactor, do not hide thyself
From their desiring eyes, but let us all
United——

Ner. O Chatillon, talk not thus
Of my deservings, I have done no more
Than was my duty ; circumstanc'd like me,
Like me thou woud'st have acted.

Cha. Ev'ry Christian
Shou'd sacrifice himself to his religion :
To leave our own, and think on others' good,
Is our first happiness ; how blest art thou,
By gracious heav'n appointed to perform
This noble duty ! but, for us, the sport
Of cruel fortune, slaves in Solyma,
By Osman's father left in chains, and long
Forgotten, here for life we had remain'd
In sad captivity, nor e'er beheld
Our native land, had not thy gen'rous aid
Stepp'd in to save us.

Ner. 'Twas the hand of heav'n ;
I was but its unworthy instrument ;
Its providence hath soften'd the fierce soul
Of youthful Osman : but a bitter draught
Is pour'd into my cup of joy ; his mercy
Is cruel and oppressive : God, who sees
My heart, will bear me witness, that I meant
To serve his cause, and act for him alone ;
For heav'n I had reserv'd a youthful beauty,
Whom fierce Nouraddin had enslav'd, what time
The proud contemners of our holy faith
Surpris'd great Lusignan, myself long-time
A captive with her ; I at length regain'd
Short liberty, on promise of return ;
And now had fondly hoped, delusive dream !
To bring back Zara to that happy court
Where Lewis and the virtues reign : already
The queen, propitious to my friendly zeal,
Forth from the throne stretch'd her protecting hand ;
But now, alas ! the wish'd-for moment near,
That shou'd have freed her from captivity,
She must not go ; what did I say ? she will not ;

Zara.

Zara herself forsakes the Christian faith
 For Osman, for the Sultan, who, it seems,
 Adores her—but we'll think no more of Zara,
 Another cruel care demands our grief,
 Another base refusal ; O Chatillon,
 The wretched Christian's hope is now no more.

Cha. Accept my all, my liberty, my life,
 If it can save them, 'tis at thy disposal.

Ner. Alas ! old Lusignan is still a slave,
 The last of his great race, a race of heroes,
 Descended from the valiant Bouillon ; he,
 Whom fame has made immortal, still must groan
 In chains, for Osman never will restore him.

Cha. Then all thy goodness, all thy cares are vain :
 What soldier, who e'er held his honour dear,
 Wou'd wish for freedom whilst his chief remains
 In slav'ry ! Thou, Nerestan, cou'd'st not know
 The gallant Lusignan as I have known him,
 For thou wert born, so gracious heav'n ordain'd,
 Long after those sad times of woe and slaughter,
 When I beheld our city fall a prey
 To these barbarians : O if thou had'st seen
 The temple sack'd, the holy tomb profan'd,
 Fathers, and children, husbands, daughters, wives,
 In flames expiring at the altars feet ;
 Our good old sov'reign, bent beneath the weight
 Of years, and murder'd o'er his bleeding sons !
 Then Lusignan, the last of his high race,
 Reviv'd our drooping courage ; terrible
 He stood, amidst the carnage of the field,
 His right hand grasp'd a falchion wet with blood,
 And with the left he pointed to the cross ;
 Then cry'd aloud, now, countrymen, be faithful,
 The pow'r divine, that favour'd us this day,
 Protected him in that tremendous hour
 Beneath its friendly wing, and smooch'd his path
 To safety and repose : Cæsarea then
 Receiv'd our poor remains, where Lusignan
 Was by the gen'ral voice proclaim'd our king :
 O my Nerestan, the Almighty pow'r,
 To humble haughty man, with-holds from him

Fair virtue's prize till life's short race is run ;
 We fought long-time for heav'n, but fought in vain ;
 The sacred city, smoking in its ruins,
 Still lay, when by a treach'rous Greek betray'd
 In our asylum, we beheld the flame
 That rag'd in hapless Sion reach to us,
 And o'er Cæsarea's walls with fury spread ;
 There, bound in ignominious chains, I saw
 Great Lusignan, superior to misfortune,
 And only weeping for his country's fate ;
 E'er since that fatal hour the good old man,
 The Christians' father (he deserves that name)
 In a dark dungeon lies, by all neglected,
 By all forgotten : such is the hard fate
 For us he suffers, and whilst he's wretched
 Tell me, Nerestan, how can we be happy ?

Ner. Unless we were barbarians : O I loathe
 The destiny that keeps us from each other ;
 Thou hast recall'd the times and sorrows past ;
 I shudder at the sad remembrance of them :
 Cæsarea bury'd in her smoaking ruins,
 Thy prison, and great Lusignan in bondage,
 Were the first objects that my eyes beheld ;
 I know thy woes, with them my life began ;
 Mid'st shrieking infants, ravish'd from the breasts
 Of trembling mothers, was Nerestan borne
 To this seraglio, with my fellow-captive,
 The lovely Zara, who, forgive my sighs,
 For this barbarian now hath left her God.

Cha. It is the glory of these Mussulmans
 Thus to seduce the minds of captive Christians ;
 Blest be the hand of heav'n that sav'd thy youth
 From their delusions ; but, my lord, this Zara,
 Tho' she renounc'd the Christian faith, may serve
 The Christian cause ; her int'rest with the Sultan,
 Who loves her, may be useful ; by what arm
 God sends us help, it matters not ; for justice
 With wisdom oft conspires to draw advantage
 Alike from our misfortunes, and our crimes :
 The beauteous Zara's influence may subdue
 The stubborn heart of Osman, and persuade him

To give us back a hero, whom himself
Must needs admire, and whom he cannot fear.

Ner. But think'st thou Lusignan wou'd condescend
To take his liberty on terms like these?
Or if he wou'd, how can I get from Zara
A moment's audience? Osman will not grant it:
Will this seraglio's gates, for ever barr'd,
Open to me? nay, grant I gain admission,
What can I hope from an apostate woman?
Nerestan's presence wou'd reproach her falshood,
And she must read her shame upon my brow:
'Tis most ungrateful to the gen'rous mind
To sue for aid of those whom we despise:
If they refuse, it sorely hurts our pride;
And if they grant, we blush t'accept it of them.

Chat. Yet think on Lusignan, and strive to serve him.

Ner. I must: but how to get at this false woman—
We're interrupted; ha! who comes? 'tis Zara.

S C E N E II.

ZARA, CHATILLON, NERESTAN.

Zara. [*To Nerestan.*] Be not alarm'd; by Osman's
leave I come

To thank the brave Nerestan; do not look
So sternly on me, nor with bitter words
Reproach my weakness; I have wish'd, yet fear'd,
To meet thee; why, I know not, but my heart
Still flutters at thy presence; from our birth
We have been subject to one common fate;
One prison held us in our infant years;
Together have we felt the galling yoke
Of slav'ry, still by tender friendship made
Lighter to both: at length thy kinder fate
Led thee to France, and I was left to mourn
Thy absence; whether it arose from pity,
From nobleness of soul, or partial fondness,
I know not, but thy gen'rous ardour sought
And gain'd a ransom for the hapless Zara;
But heav'n hath counteracted thy kind purpose,

And

And I am doom'd for ever to remain
In Solyma : long time a slave unknown,
And undistinguish'd, Zara liv'd, till Osman
Look'd down upon me ; but tho' fortune smiles
Propitious now, and offers all her charms
Of pomp and grandeur, yet I cannot leave
Without regret my fellow-captive : oft
Shall I reflect on thee, and on thy goodness,
And cherish the remembrance of thy virtues :
Like thee, I will endeavour to relieve
The wretched, ever will protect the Christians,
And be a mother to them ; for thy sake
They will be always dear to Zara.

Ner. You

Protect the Christians ! you who have forsook them ?
You who have trampled on the sacred ashes
Of Lusignan's great ancestors ?

Zara. O no :

I hold their virtues in most dear remembrance,
And come ev'n now to give you back your joy,
Your hope, the last and greatest of their race :
Your Lusignan is free, and comes to meet you.

Chat. And shall we once more see our honour'd father,
Our best support ?

Ner. And shall we owe to Zara

A life so precious ?

Zara. When I ask'd the favour

I did not hope it, but the gen'rous sultan,
Beyond my wish, consented ; and they soon
Will bring him here

Ner. How my heart beats Chatillon !

Zara. I weep his fate, Nerestan, for, like him,
I too have languish'd in captivity ;
Woes which ourselves have felt we always pity.

Ner. Good heav'n, what virtue in an infidel !

SCENE

S C E N E III.

ZARA, LUSIGNAN, CHATILLON, NERESTAN,
several Christian slaves.

Luf. Who calls me from the dark abode of death?
Am I with Christians? O support me, guide
My trembling footsteps; I am weak with age
And with misfortunes: am I free indeed?

Zara. You are, my lord.

Chat. You live to make us happy,
Us, wretched Christians.

Luf. Sure I know that voice:
Can it be you, Chatillon? do I see
My friend, my fellow martyr to the faith
Of our forefathers? Where am I? O aid
My feeble sight!

Chat. This is the palace, sir,
Built by your royal ancestors, but now
The seat of fierce Nouraddin's son.

Zara. Great Osman,
Its noble master, is a friend to virtue:
This gen'rous youth, [Pointing to Nerestan.
To thee unknown, from France
Is late arriv'd, and kindly brings with him
The ransom of ten Christian slaves; the sultan,
Resolv'd in honour's path to tread with him,
To crown their wishes, has deliver'd thee.

Luf. The sons of France are in their nature noble,
Beneficent, and brave; I know them well,
And have experienc'd their humanity.

[Turning to Nerestan.

Hast thou then pass'd the ocean to relieve
These wretched captives' woes, and set us free?
Say, gen'rous stranger, whom am I to thank
For this unequall'd goodness?

Ner. I am call'd
Nerestan; almost from my birth a slave
In Solyma; I left in earliest years

The

The Turkish empire, and with Lewis learn'd
 The rugged task of war: beneath his banner
 Long time I fought; to him I owe my rank
 And fortune, to the first of monarchs, famed
 Alike for valour and for holy zeal
 To heav'n and its true faith: I follow'd him
 To Charent's banks, where the fierce English, long
 Unconquer'd, bent beneath the Gallic pow'r,
 Haste then, and shew the venerable marks
 Of thy hard slav'ry to the best of kings;
 He will reward thee; Paris will revere
 A martyr to the cross, and Lewis' court,
 Th' asylum of oppressed royalty,
 With open arms receive an injur'd sov'reign.

Luf. I knew the court of France in all its glory;
 When Philip conquer'd at Bovine, I fought
 With Montmorency, Melun, and d'Estaing,
 With valiant Nesle, and the renowned Coucy,
 But never shall behold it more; alas!
 Thou see'st I am descending to the grave
 To seek the king of kings, and ask of him
 The due reward of all my suff'rings past.
 Whilst I have life, yet hear me, thou kind witness
 Of my last moments, good Chatillon, thou
 Nereitan too, and this fair mourner here,
 Who honours with her tears the wretched fate
 Of dying Lusignan: O pity me,
 Pity the most unhappy father sure,
 That ever groan'd beneath the wrath of heav'n!
 Time has no pow'r o'er miseries like mine:
 Still I lament a daughter, and three sons,
 Torn from me in their infancy: Chatillon,
 Thou must remember it

Chat. I do, my lord,
 And shudder at it now.

Luf. A pris'ner with me,
 Cæsarea then in flames, thou saw'st my wife
 And two of my dear sons expire.

Chat. I did;
 Loaded with chains I cou'd not help them.

Luf.

Luf. O

I was a father, and yet cou'd not die :
O ye lov'd infants, from your heav'nly mansion
Look down propitious on my other children,
If yet they live, O succour and protect them !
To this seraglio, ev'n where now we stand,
That daughter and that son, whom I lament,
Were by the hands of vile barbarians borne,
And here condemn'd to bear the shameful yoke
Of slav'ry.

Chat. 'Tis too true ; your daughter then
Was in her cradle ; in these arms I held her,
And scarce had time to sprinkle o'er her face
The holy water, and pronounce her Christian,
Ere the rude hands of bloody Saracens
Rush'd in, and tore her from me : thy last son,
Scarce four years old, just capable of feeling
His early sorrows, to Jerusalem
Was carry'd with his sister.

Ner. How my heart
Beats at the mournful tale ! about that age
I was a pris'ner in Cæsarea ; thence,
Cover'd with blood, and bound in chains, I follow'd
A croud of Christian slaves.

Luf. Did'st thou ; O heav'n !
And wert thou brought up [*Looking earnestly at him.*]
here in this seraglio ?

Alas ! perhaps you might have known my children,
Your age the same ; perhaps these eyes—O madam,
What foreign ornament is that ? How long
May you have worn it ?

Zara. Ever since my birth :
Why sigh you, sir ?

Luf. Permit my trembling hands—

Zara. Whence is this strange emotion ? O my lord,
What look you so intently on ?

Luf. O heav'n !
O Providence ! O eyes, do not deceive
My fearful hope—'tis she—it was a present
To my dear wife : my children always wore it
Upon their birth-day : O, I faint, I die
With rapture.

Zara.

Zara. Ha! what do I hear? my soul
Is lost in doubt; O say, my lord——

Luf. Great God,
Who see'st my tears, forsake me not; O thou,
Who on this cross did'st perish, and for us
Did'st rise again, this is thy work, O haste,
Complete it, gracious heav'n! *[Turning to Zara:]*
And hast thou kept it
Indeed so long? and were you pris'ners both,
Both in Cæsarea seiz'd, and brought together?

Zara. We were, my lord.

Ner. Can it be so?

Luf. Their speech,
Their features, all confirm it; ev'ry look
Brings their dear mother to my eyes: O heav'n,
Restore my feeble senses thus o'erpow'r'd
With joy! O madam, O Nerestan, help,
Chatillon, to support me! O Nerestan,
If yet I ought to call thee by that name,
Once thou wert wounded by a desp'rate hand;
I saw the villain strike thee; hast thou not
The scar upon thy breast?

Ner. I have, my lord.

Luf. Just God! blest moment!

Ner. O my lord! O Zara!

[Kneeling.]

Luf. Come near, my children.

Ner. Am I then your son?

Zara. My lord!

Luf. O blest discov'ry! happy hour!
My son! my daughter! O embrace your father!
Chat. Trust me, Chatillon's heart rejoices with you.

Luf. I know not how to force me from your arms,
My dearest children! do I then behold
Once more my wretched family? my son,
Thou art the worthy heir of Lusignan:
But say, my daughter, O dispel the doubts
That rise to check my happiness! O God,
That guid'st our fortunes, thou, who hast restor'd
My daughter, have I found a Christian? Zara,
Alas! thou weep'st, and thy dejected eyes

Are

Are turn'd aside from me: unhappy woman!
 I understand thee but too well: O heav'n,
 O guilt! guilt!

Zara. Yes: I'll not deceive my father:
 Brought up in Osman's court, and to his laws
 Obedient; punish *far*, your wretched daughter;
 I own I was a Mussulman.

Lus. The wrath
 Of heav'n pursues me still; and but for thee,
 My son, that word had ended my sad being:
 For thee, O God! and in thy glorious cause,
 These threescore years old Lusignan hath fought,
 But fought in vain; hath seen thy temple fall,
 Thy goodness spurn'd, thy sacred rites profan'd:
 For twenty summers in a dungeon hid,
 With tears have I implor'd thee to protect
 My children; thou hast giv'n them to my wishes,
 And in my daughter now I find thy foe:
 I am myself, alas! the fatal cause
 Of thy lost faith; had I not been a slave—
 But, O my daughter! thou dear lovely object
 Of all my cares, O think on the pure blood
 Within thy veins, the blood of twenty kings,
 All Christians like myself, the blood of heroes,
 Defenders of the faith, the blood of martyrs:
 Thou art a stranger to thy mother's fate;
 Thou dost not know, that in the very moment
 That gave thee birth, I saw her massacred
 By those barbarians, whose detested faith
 Thou hast embrac'd: thy brothers, the dear martyrs,
 Stretch forth their hands from heav'n, and wish t'embrace
 A sister; O remember them! that God,
 Whom thou betray'st, for us, and for mankind,
 Ev'n in this place expir'd; where I so oft
 Have fought for him, where now his blood by me
 Calls loudly on thee: see yon temple, see
 These walls; behold the sacred mountain, where
 Thy Saviour bled; the tomb whence he arose
 Victorious; in each path, where'er thou tread'st,
 Shalt thou behold the footsteps of thy God:
 Wilt thou renounce thy honour and thy father?

Wilt

Wilt thou renounce thy maker ? O my Zara,
 Thou weep'st ; the blood forsakes thy cheek ; I see
 Thy heart is soften'd to repentance : truth,
 Sent by indulgent heav'n, already beams
 On thy enlighten'd soul ; again I find
 My daughter ; from the hands of infidels
 To save her thus is happiness and glory.

Ner. Do I indeed once more behold a sister ?
 And is her soul—

Zara. Dear author of my life,
 My father, speak ; what must I do ?

Luf. Remove
 At once my shame and sorrow with a word,
 And say thou art— a Christian.

Zara. Then, my lord,
 I am a Christian.

Luf. 'Tis enough, O God !
 Thou hear'st, receive, and ratify her-vow !

S C E N E IV.

ZARA, LUSIGNAN, CHATILLON, NERESTAN,
 ORASMIN.

Oras. Madam, the sultan wills me to inform you,
 You must this moment leave the place, and quit
 These Christian-slaves : you, Frenchmen, follow me.

Chat. What dreadful stroke is this ?

Luf. Our courage, friends,
 Must now support us.

Zara. O my lord !

Luf. O thou,
 Whom now I dare not name, remember me,
 And swear that thou wilt keep the fatal secret.

Zara. I swear.

Luf. Farewel ; the rest be left to heav'n.

A C T



A C T III. S C E N E I.

OSMAN, ORASMIN.

Ofm. **O**RASMIN, 'tis not as thy groundless fears
 Suggested to thee; Lewis turns no more
 His arms against us; his disgusted people
 Are weary'd with the unsuccessful search
 Of climates, which heav'n ne'er design'd for them:
 They will not leave their seats of ease and plenty
 To languish in Arabia's sultry deserts,
 And wet our verdant palms in Christian blood:
 Their ships are spread indeed o'er Syria's sea,
 And Asia trembles at the sight; but know,
 Tow'rd fertile Egypt Lewis bends his way,
 In search of Melidor, my secret foe:
 Their quarrels fix but on a firmer base
 The throne of Osman: I have nought to fear
 From Egypt or from France; by their division
 My pow'r is strengthen'd: prodigal of blood,
 I thank 'em for it, they destroy each other,
 To save my subjects and avenge my cause.
 Release those Christians; I wou'd please their master,
 And therefore they shall live; let 'em be sent
 To Lewis; it may teach him to respect
 Our holy faith, and know me for his friend:
 Tell him I give him Lusignan, the man
 Who claims by birth alliance to his throne,
 Whom my brave father twice subdu'd, and kept
 In chains, nor whilst he liv'd wou'd set him free.

Orasf. His name so dear to Christians—

Ofm. For his name

I heed it not.

Orasf. O but, my lord, if Lewis—

Ofm. 'Twere needless to dissemble now, Orasmin,
 'Tis Zara's will, therefore no more; my heart

Yields

Yields to its conqueror, and Lusignan
Is giv'n to her; I had not else releas'd
My pris'ner: Lewis is not worth my care;
But I wou'd make atonement for the wrongs
Of injur'd Zara and her Christian friends;
I've been too harsh with them: 'tis but an hour
Before our happy nuptials, and mean time
I wou'd oblige my Zara; she desires
Some private conf'rence with the brave Nerestan,
That gen'rous Christian—

Oraf. And have you comply'd?

Osm. I have, Orasmin: they were slaves together
Ev'n from their childhood, and perhaps may ne'er
Behold each other more; she asks, in short,
Who must not be deny'd: the rigid laws
Of our seraglio were not made for Zara;
I hate its cruel, its severe restraint,
That binds the free-born soul in shameful bonds,
And makes a virtue of necessity.
I am not sprung, thank heav'n! of Asian blood,
But, midst the rocks of Tauric Scythia born,
From my forefathers boast a Scythian heart,
Fi'ry and bold, yet gen'rous and humane:
I wou'd have all partake of Osman's joy,
And therefore let Nerestan see her: go,
Conduct him to her, he attends without;
Let Zara be obey'd.

SCENE II.

ORASMIN, NERESTAN.

Oraf. Please you to rest
A moment here, till Zara comes.

SCENE III.

NERESTAN, alone.

Just heav'n!
And must I leave her? cruel fate! to whom,

To

To what is she reserv'd? alas! my father,
Religion, virtue—but she's here.

[*Alone.*

SCENE IV.

ZARA, NERESTAN.

Ner. My sister,

At length we may converse; but what a time
Hath heav'n appointed for our meeting! ne'er
Wilt thou behold thy wretched father more.

Zara. Not Lufignan? O God!

Ner. His end is nigh:

His feeble pow'rs, oppress'd with sudden joy
At th' unexpected sight of his dear children,
Are quite exhausted, and the springs of life
Will soon be motionless; but, O my sister,
Think how the wretched state of his last moments
Will be embitter'd by his cruel doubts
Concerning thee; uncertain of thy faith
He dies, and asks with his expiring breath
If Zara is a Christian.

Zara. Am I not

Thy sister? think'st thou I will e'er renounce
Thy faith and mine, forgetful of the tie
That binds us?

Ner. Yet thou art a stranger to it;
'Tis but the morning of that glorious day
Which must enlighten thee; thou hast not yet
Receiv'd the precious pledge, the sacred stream
That copious flows to wash our crimes away:
Swear by our mis'ries, by our family,
By all those holy martyrs whence we sprung,
Thou wilt this day receive the mystic seal,
The mark distinctive of the living God.

Zara. I swear to thee, by him, whom I adore,
That God, whose laws unknowing I revere,
Henceforth, Nerestan, to embrace thy faith
And be a Christian: but, O tell me, what
Doth it require of Zara?

Ner.

Ner. To detest

Thy tyrant master, and obey the God
Of our forefathers, that benignant pow'r
Who dy'd to save us, who conducted me
To my dear sister, and restor'd to thee
Our long-lost father; but, alas! Nerestan
Cannot instruct thee, mine's a soldier's zeal,
Devoid of knowledge; soon a holy priest
Shall visit thee, and open the fair book
Of wisdom, clear thy mind's obstructed sight,
And give thee liberty, and life: remember
Thy oath; take heed that baptism lead thee not
To curses and to death: but how, my sister,
Shall I gain leave to bring him to thee? whom
Must I apply to in this vile seraglio?
O heav'n! that thus the blood of twenty kings,
The daughter of great Lusignan, that thou,
Nerestan's sister, and a Christian, thus
Shou'd be the slave of Osman! but, no more;
You understand me, Zara: gracious God!
Were we reserv'd for this at last?

Zara. Go on,

My cruel brother, and pursue thy triumph
O'er Zara's weakness; O thou know'st not yet
Her secret faults, her sorrows, and her crimes:
Pity, Nerestan, an unhappy sister,
Mised, betray'd, and dying with despair:
I am a Christian, and impatient wait
The holy water that must purge my heart,
And wash its stains away: I will not live
Unworthy of my brother, of myself,
Of my great ancestors, of thee, my father,
Afflicted Lusignan! but tell me all,
What will your Christian laws require of Zara?
How will they punish an unhappy woman,
Left to repine in sad captivity?
What, if amidst her sorrows she shou'd find
A gen'rous patron in a brave barbarian,
Warm'd by his goodness, what if she shou'd feel
A grateful passion, and give up her heart
To him that sav'd her?

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G

Ner.

Ner. Ha! what say'st thou? rather
Might instant death—

Zara. Strike, and prevent thy shame;
For know—

Ner. O heav'n! could'st thou, my sister?

Zara. Yes;

I stand condemn'd, I am my own accuser:
Osman adores me, and I meant to wed him.

Ner. To wed him? to wed Osman? can it be?
Cou'd'st thou, descended from a race of kings,
Cou'd'st thou, my sister?

Zara. Strike; for know, I love him.

Ner. Shame as thou art to our untainted blood,
Now, did I listen to the voice of honour,
Did not the law of that all-saving God
Whom yet thou know'st not, did not my religion
With-hold my arm, this moment wou'd I rush
Into the palace, and there sacrifice
This vile barbarian, this imperious lover;
Wou'd plunge the dagger in thy guilty breast,
Then turn it on my own: O infamy!
Whilst Lewis, the world's bright example, bears
His conqu'ring legions to th' affrighted Nile,
But to return on wings of victory
To free thy captive God, and give him back
His native walls, mean time Nerestan's sister
Renounces all, and weds an infidel:
And must I tell the good old man, his daughter
Hath chos'n a Tartar for her God? alas!
Ev'n now thy dying father kneels to heav'n
For Zara's happiness.

Zara. O stay, my brother,
Perhaps thy Zara still deserves thy love;
Thou dost not know me; spare thy keen reproaches,
For O thy cruel scorn, thy bitter wrath,
Is worse to me ev'n than the death I ask'd,
Which yet thou hast refus'd me: O Nerestan,
I know thou art oppress'd, I know thou suffer'st
For my misfortunes; but I suffer more:
Wou'd that kind heav'n had ta'en my wretched life,
Before this heart glow'd with a guilty flame

For

For Osman! and yet, who that knew his virtues
 Wou'd not have lov'd him! he did all for me;
 His gen'rous heart from crouds of fond admirers
 Selected Zara; she alone subdued
 His fiery soul, and soften'd his resentment:
 He hath reviv'd the Christian's hope; to him
 I owe the dear delight of seeing thee,
 My brother: O Nerestan, thou shou'd'st pardon,
 Indeed thou shou'd'st; for I am truly wretched:
 My oath, my duty, my remorse, my father,
 My fatal passion, and thy cruel anger,
 Are punishment enough; repentance fills
 All Zara's soul, and leaves no room for love.

Ner. I blame, yet pity thee: kind heav'n, I trust,
 Will never let thee perish in thy sins;
 The arm of god, that makes the weakest strong,
 Will cherish and support a tender flow'r,
 That bends beneath the fury of the storm:
 He will not suffer thy divided heart
 To fluctuate thus, 'twixt him and a barbarian;
 Baptism will quench the guilty flame, and Zara
 In the true faith shall live a pious Christian,
 Or die a martyr: promise then thy father,
 Promise thy king, thy country, and that God,
 Whose pow'rful voice thou hast already heard,
 Thou wilt not think of these detested nuptials
 Before the priest hath open'd thy dark mind,
 And, in Nerestan's sight, pronounc'd thee Christian:
 Say, wilt thou promise, Zara?

Zara. Yes; I promise:
 Make me a Christian, make me free; do what
 'Thou wilt with Zara: but haste, close the eyes
 Of my dear father: wou'd I cou'd go with thee,
 And die before him!

Ner. Sister, fare thee well!
 Since I must leave thee in this hated place,
 Farewel! remember, I shall soon return
 To save thee from perdition, from thyself,
 And from the pow'rs of hell, by holy baptism.

S C E N E V.

Z A R A, alone.

I am alone : now hear me, gracious heav'n,
 For what am I reserv'd? O God, command
 This rebel heart not to relinquish thee!
 Am I the daughter of great Lusignan,
 Or Osman's wife; a lover, or a Christian?
 Ye sacred oaths, my father, and my country,
 All shall be heard, all shall be satisfy'd
 But where's my friend? where is my Fatima?
 In this distressful hour the world forsakes me:
 Deserted, and forlorn, how shall I bear
 The galling weight of these discordant duties!
 O God! I will be thine, and thine alone;
 But O! preserve me from the sight of Osman,
 The dear, the gen'rous Osman! did I think
 This morn, that ere the day was past, my heart
 Shou'd dread to see him; I whose ev'ry hope
 And joy, and happiness, on him alone
 Depended? O! I had no other care,
 No pleasure, but to listen to his love;
 To wish, and wait for, and adore my Osman!
 And now it is a crime to think of him.

S C E N E VI.

Z A R A, O S M A N.

Osman. Come forth, my love! for my impatient soul
 Is on the wing, and will not brook delay!
 The torch of Hymen casts its sacred light
 On happy Osman, and the perfum'd mosque
 Invites us; Mahomet's all-pow'rful God
 Propitious hears and answers to our vows;
 My people on their knees, in fervent pray'r,
 United sue for Zara's happiness;

Whilst

Whilst thy proud rivals, who disputed long
My heart with thee, at length confess thy pow'r,
Pleas'd to submit, and happy to obey:
The rites attend thee, and the throne's prepar'd;
Haste then, my love, and make thy Osman happy.

Zara. O grief! O love! O wretched Zara!

Osman. Haste.

Zara. O hide me!

Osman. Ha! what say'st thou?

Zara. O my lord——

Osman. Give me thy hand, come, beauteous Zara,
deign——

Zara. What can I say to him? assist me, heav'n!

Osman. O! I must triumph o'er this tender weakness
This sweet embarrassment; it makes me love thee
With double ardour.

Zara. O!

Osman. Those sighs, my Zara,
Endear thee more to Osman; 'tis the mark
Of modest virtue thus to shrink from love;
But haste, my charmer, and repay my fondness,
My constancy——

Zara. O Fatima, support me!
My lord——

Osman. Well, what? O heav'n!

Zara. That heav'n's my witness,
All Zara's hopes of happiness were plac'd
On thee; my soul desir'd to call thee mine:
Not that I sought the splendor of a throne;
Thoughts distant far and nobler fill'd my breast:
I cou'd have wish'd, to thee and to thy virtues
United, to have liv'd in solitude,
With thee despis'd the pomp of Asia's pride,
And spurn'd her crowns and sceptres at my feet:
But O! my lord, these Christians——

Osman. What have they
To do with Osman, or with Osman's love?

Zara. Old Lusignan, oppress'd with age and sorrow,
Now touches his last moments.

Osman. Be it so;
What is that Christian slave to thee, or why

Feel'st thou for him? thou art not of his faith,
 But from thy infant years hast follow'd mine,
 And worshipp'd Osman's God; shall Zara weep
 Because an old man pays the debt of nature?
 At such a time as this shall Zara mourn?
 Shou'd she not rather centre all her cares
 In Osman now, and think of nought but love?

Zara. If ever I was dear to thee—

Osman. If ever!

O God!

Zara. Defer, my lord, a little while
 Our nuptials, let me—

Osman. Ha! what say'st thou? heav'n!
 Can Zara speak thus?

Zara. O I cannot bear
 His anger.

Osman. Zara!

Zara. O forgive, my lord,
 These sighs! alas, I have forgot myself,
 Forgot my duty, all I owe to thee:
 I cannot bear that look—permit me, sir,
 But for a moment to retire, to hide
 My tears, my grief, my love, and my despair.

[She goes out.]

SCENE VII.

OSMAN, ORASMIN.

Osman. Amazement! dumb and motionless I stand
 With horror: did I hear aright, Orasmin,
 Was it to me that Zara spoke, to Osman?
 Does she avoid me; fly from me? O heav'n!
 What have I seen, and whence this wond'rous change?
 She's gone, she's lost; I know not who I am
 Or what, or where.

Orasmin. You are yourself the cause
 Of your complaint, and but accuse a heart
 Where you and you alone in triumph reign.

Osman.

Osman. But why those sighs, those tears, that sudden flight!

Whence that deep sorrow, in her down-cast eyes
So plainly wrote? O if that wily Frenchman—
Horrible thought! how dreadfully the light
Breaks in upon me! 'tis impossible;
A vile barbarian; O it cannot be,
Orasmin; think'st thou that the heart of Osman
Will e'er descend to fear a Christian slave?
But tell me, thou perhaps could'st mark her features,
And understand the language of her eye;
Am I betray'd? nay, do not hide thy thoughts,
But let me know my mis'ry: ha! thou tremblest;
It is enough.

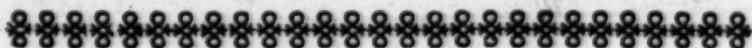
Orasmin. I wou'd not rive thy heart
With fond suspicions: I beheld her weep,
But nothing more; saw nought that cou'd alarm—

Osman. Was I reserv'd to bear an injury
Like this? had Zara meant to play me false,
She wou'd have done it with more art; wou'd ne'er
Have openly avow'd her treach'rous purpose:
O no; she must be innocent; but tell me,
This Frenchman—he, thou say'st too sigh'd and wept;
And what of that! he might not sigh for her;
It was not love perhaps that made him weep;
Or if it was, why shou'd I fear a slave,
One who to-morrow parts from her for ever?

Orasmin. Against our laws, my lord, you gave him leave
To see her twice; he came.

Osman. The traitor! yes,
I know he did; but if again he dares
To visit her, I'll tear the slave to pieces,
And mix his life-blood with the faithless Zara's:
Pardon, my friend, the transports of a heart
So deeply pierc'd; it is by nature warm,
And has been wounded in the tend'rest part:
I know my rage, Orasmin, and my weakness,
Know 'tis beneath me to be thus disturb'd;
But Zara—O I cannot, will not think it:
Her heart cou'd ne'er be guilty of such baseness,
It was not made for falsehood; nor shall Osman

Stoop to complaint or mean submission; no:
 It were unworthy of a king to wait
 For explanations of this strange conduct:
 I will resume that empire o'er my heart
 Which I had lost, forget the very name
 Of Zara: yes; henceforth let my seraglio
 Be shut for ever, fear and terror reign
 Within my palace; let despotic pow'r
 Rule unreluctant o'er a race of slaves!
 Osman henceforth shall be an eastern king,
 And reign like them: perhaps we may forget
 Our rank a while, and cast an eye of favor
 Upon our vassals; but to stand in awe
 Of a proud mistress, is most shameful; no:
 To western climes we leave such fond submission:
 *The dang'rous sex, ambitious to enslave
 Our easy hearts, and bend them to their will,
 In Europe rule, but here they must obey.



ACT IV. SCENE I.

ZARA, FATIMA.

Fat. **H**OW I admire, and how I pity thee!
 The Christian God inspires thee; let not then
 Thy soul despair, for he shall give thee strength
 To break the pow'rful chains of mighty love.

Zara. When shall I make the glorious sacrifice?

Fat.

* Those amongst our female readers who are fond of a poetical tag at the end of an act, and prefer rhyme to blank verse, may perhaps approve of the following looser translation.

The sex, still dang'rous, and ambitious still
 To conquer man, and bend him to their will,
 O'er easy Europe rule with sov'reign sway,
 But wiser Asians teach 'em to obey.

Fat. Thou suest to heav'n for pardon, but may'st claim
Its justice ; God will guard thy innocence,
And shield thy virtue.

Zara. Zara never wanted
His kind protection more.

Fat. The God thou serv'st
Will be a father to thee ; he shall guide
Thy wand'ring steps, speak to thy doubting heart,
And take thee to his bosom : tho' the priest
Dare not attend thee here—

Zara. Alas ! my friend,
How have I pierc'd the soul of gen'rous Osman,
And driv'n him to despair ! a dreadful task !
But 'tis thy will, O God, and I obey :
Zara had been too happy.

Fat. Wilt thou then
Hazard the vict'ry after all thy toil ?

Zara. Unhappy vict'ry, and inhuman virtue !
Alas ! thou know'st not, Fatima, how dear
They cost me ; all my hopes of happiness
Were fix'd on love, and Osman : take my heart,
Accept my guilty tears, subdue my passion,
Eternal God, and make me all thy own !
But, O my friend, ev'n now the lovely image
Of my dear gen'rous Osman steps between
My God and me ; that form is still before me,
For ever in my sight : ye race of kings,
From whom I sprung, my father, mother, country,
And thou, my God, since you have ta'en him from me,
Finish a life that is not worth my care
Without him ; let me die a blameless victim,
Let Osman close the eyes of her he lov'd !
But he has left me, left the wretched Zara,
Enquires not, thinks not of me ; O I faint,
My Fatima, I never can survive it.

Fat. Remember thou'rt the daughter of a king,
The favourite of heav'n, the chos'n of God ;
And will not he protect thee ?

Zara. Will he not
Protect my Osman too ? a God of mercy
Can never hate, can never persecute

A heart so just, so brave, so good as Osman's;
 What cou'd he more, had he been born a Christian?
 O that this holy minister wou'd come,
 This blest interpreter of heav'n's high will,
 To ease my wounded heart, and give me comfort!
 Still I have hope, that kind benignant God,
 Whose darling attribute is clemency,
 Will not forbid our union, will forgive
 The struggles of a heart so torn as mine;
 Perhaps by raising Zara to the throne
 Of Syria he might serve the Christian cause:
 Great Saladin, thou know'st, whose potent arm
 Robb'd us of Jordan's empire, who, like Osman,
 Was fam'd for mercy, from a Christian sprung.

Fat. Alas! thou see'st not that, to calm thy soul,
 Mistaken as thou art——

Zara. I see it all;
 See that my father, country, friends, condemn me;
 See that I follow Lusignan, yet love,
 Adore my Osman; see that still my life
 Is link'd with his: O I cou'd wish to see him,
 To throw me at his feet, and tell him all.

Fat. That wou'd destroy thy brother, and endanger
 The Christians, who have no support but thee;
 Thou wou'd'st betray that God, who calls thee back
 From error's paths, and bids thee follow him.

Zara. O did'st thou know the noble heart of Osman!

Fat. He is protector of the Mussulmans,
 Therefore the more he loves thee, doubtless, Zara,
 Less willing must he be to have thee worship
 A God, his faith has taught him to abhor.
 The priest, thou know'st, will visit thee in secret,
 And thou hast promis'd——

Zara. I will wait for him;
 I've promis'd to preserve the secret still
 From Osman; cruel silence! but to make
 My woes complete, I am no longer lov'd.

SCENE

S C E N E II.

OSMAN, ZARA.

Osman. There was a time when thy deluding charms
 Enflam'd my soul ; a willing captive then,
 I glory'd in my chains : I hoped indeed,
 Vain hope ! a sov'reign fighting at thy feet
 Might claim some kind return, and thought myself
 Belov'd by Zara ; but I'm undeceiv'd :
 Yet think not, madam, I will ever stoop
 To mean complaints, or with the whining race
 Of vulgar lovers vindicate my wrongs
 By loud reproaches ; no : I am above
 Diffimulation, and am come to tell you,
 I mean to treat it with that just contempt
 Which it deserves ; think not by female arts,
 Or subtle arguments, to colour o'er
 Thy conduct ; I disclaim thee, know thee not ;
 And, for I wou'd not make thee blush, desire
 The hated cause may-be a secret still ;
 I wou'd not wish to know it : all is past :
 Another may be found to fill the throne,
 Which you despise ; another may have eyes
 Perhaps for Osman's merit, and a heart
 For Osman's love : I know 'twill cost me dear
 To part from Zara, but I am resolv'd :
 For I had rather lose thee, rather die
 With anguish and despair, than make thee mine,
 If but a sigh escap'd thee for another,
 And not for Osman : fare thee well ; these eyes
 Must ne'er behold thee more.

Zara. It is thy will,
 O God, to reign unrivall'd in my heart,
 And thou hast robb'd me now of all :—my lord,
 Since you no longer love me—

Osman. 'Tis too true ;
 Honour commands it ; I ador'd thee once,
 But I must leave thee, must renounce thee, 'twas

Thy

Thy own request—beneath another law—
Zara, thou weep'st !

Zara. O think not, I beseech you,
Think not, my lord, I shall regret the pomp
And splendor of a throne ; it is decreed
That I must lose thee, such is my hard fate :
But punish me for ever, angry heav'n,
If there be aught on earth I shall regret
But Osman's heart !

Osman. Zara, thou lov'st me !

Zara. Love him !

O God !

Osman. Amazement ? Zara said she lov'd me :
Why then, thou cruel maid, why tear the heart
Of faithful Osman thus ? In my despair,
Alas ! I thought I cou'd command myself
To love, or hate ; but 'tis impossible :
Zara can never be forgotten ; no :
Osman cou'd never harbour such a thought,
'To place another on his throne ; forgive
My rage, my madness ; 'twas affected all,
All false ; I cou'd not leave, I cou'd not hate thee ;
It was the only scorn thy tender heart
Ever experience : O I love thee still,
And ever must : but wherefore thus delay
My happiness ? speak, was it fond caprice,
Or was it fear, or artifice ? but art
Was never made for thee ; thou need'st it not :
Ev'n where it is most innocent, it looks
Like falsehood, and perfidiousness : O, Zara,
Let it not break the holy tie that binds us :
I ever have abhorr'd it : Osman's heart
Is full of nought but truth.

Zara. Despair, and horror !

O thou art dear to me, indeed thou art,
Believe me, Osman ; and the tender love,
I feel for thee, makes me supremely wretched.

Osman. Explain thyself : O heav'n ! and can it be ?
But thou wert born to make me wretched.

Zara. Why
Must I not speak ?

Osman.

Osman. What dreadful secret, Zara,
Dost thou keep from me ? have the Christian slaves
Conspir'd against me ? speak, am I betray'd ?

Zara. Who wou'd betray so good, so kind a master ?
No, gen'rous Osman, thou hast nought to fear ;
Zara alone is wretched : but her griefs
Are to herself.

Osman. Great God ! is Zara wretched ?

Zara. Permit me on my knees, my lord, to ask
One favour of thee.

Osman. Were it Osman's life,
Thou might'st command it : speak, and it is thine.

Zara. O wou'd to heav'n we cou'd have been united !
But O, my lord, permit me this one day
To be alone ; leave me to meditate
On my misfortunes, and to hide my griefs
From thee ; to-morrow all shall be reveal'd.

Osman. O heav'n ! what woes dost thou inflict upon me !
Can'st thou——

Zara. If love still pleads for Zara, grant her
This one request ! do not refuse me.

Osman. Well ;
It must be so ; I have no will but thine :
Remember that I sacrifice to thee
The dearest, happiest moments of my life.

Zara. O talk not thus, my lord, it wounds my heart
Too deeply.

Osman. You will leave me, Zara ?

Zara. Yes :
I must ; farewell.

S C E N E III.

OSMAN, ORASMIN.

Osman. So soon to seek retirement !
It is an insult o'er my easy heart ;
The more I think, Orasmin, on her conduct,
The more am I perplex'd ; I cannot find

The

The hidden cause of this mysterious sorrow :
 By Osman's partial fondness rais'd to empire,
 Ev'n in the bosom of that happiness
 Her soul desir'd, thus loving and lov'd,
 Yet are her eyes for ever bath'd in tears :
 I hate her fond caprice, her discontent
 And causeless grief—yet was not I to blame ?
 Did I not slight her ? did I not offend
 My Zara ? wherefore then shou'd I complain ?
 I must atone for my injurious transports
 By double kindness, by indulging her
 In ev'ry wish : it is enough that Osman
 Is lov'd by Zara : her untainted soul
 Is void of art ; her's is the tender age
 Of innocence and truth, when simple nature
 Guides ev'ry thought, and dictates ev'ry word :
 I will rely on her sincerity :
 I know she loves me ; in her eyes I read
 The tender tale ; whilst her impatient soul
 Flew to her lovely lips and told me all :
 Can there on earth be hearts so base as e'er
 To boast a passion, which they never feel ?

S C E N E IV.

OSMAN, ORASMIN, MELIDOR.

Mel. My lord, the guards have stopp'd a letter sent
 To Zara.

Osman. Give it me : who sent it to her ?

Mel. One of those Christian slaves whom you releas'd,
 Who, as he strove to enter the seraglio,
 Was seiz'd, and put in chains.

Osman. Ha ! what do I read !
 Leave me—I tremble——

S C E N E

S C E N E V.

OSMAN, ORASMIN:

Oras. This may clear up all,
And set your heart at ease.

Osm. Ha ! let me read
Again ; this letter must determine all,
And fix my fate—‘ Dear Zara, now’s the time
‘ To meet us ; near the mosque thou wilt perceive
‘ A secret passage ; unsuspected thence
‘ Thou may’st escape, and easily deceive
‘ Thy keepers ; we must hazard all ; thou know’st
‘ My zeal : I wait impatient for thee ; haste,
‘ I cannot live, if thou shoud’st prove unfaithful.”
What say’st thou, my Orasmin ?

Oras. I, my lord ?
I’m shock’d, astonish’d at her.

Osm. Now thou see’st
How I am treated.

Oras. O detested treason !
You must resent an injury like this :
You, who so lately, but on slight suspicion,
So deeply felt the wound ; a deed so black,
I hope, my lord, will cure you of your love.

Osm. Haste, my Orasmin, fly this instant, shew her
That letter—let her tremble, and then plunge
The dagger in her faithless breast—no, stay,
Not yet—that Christian first—let him be brought
Before her—stay—I can determine nothing,
My rage o’erpow’rs me ; O I faint, support me,
Orasmin.

Oras. ’Tis indeed a cruel stroke !

Osm. ’Tis all unfolded now, this dreadful secret,
That sat so heavy on her guilty heart :
Beneath the specious veil of modest fear,
She left me for a while ; I let her go ;
She wept at parting ; wept but to betray me ;
O Zara, Zara.

Oras.

Oras. Ev'ry thing conspires
To make her doubly guilty : O, my lord,
Fall not a victim to her arts, recal
Thy wonted courage, and deep sense of wrong.

Ofm. This is the gallant, boasted, brave Nerestan,
The Christian's hero, that proud son of honour,
So fam'd for his sublimity of virtue ;
Admir'd, nay envy'd by the jealous *Osman* ;
Who cou'd not bear a rival in a slave,
And now he stoops to this vile treachery,
This base imposture : O but *Zara*—she
Is far more guilty, O a thousand times
More vile, more impious—a poor Christian slave,
I might have left her in her mean estate,
And not debas'd her ; well she knows what *Osman*
Has done for her ; ungrateful wretch !

Oras. My lord,\nIf midst the horrors of thy troubled soul
I might be heard—forgive me—but if——

Ofm. Yes :
I'll see, and talk to her—go, fetch her hither ;
Fly, bring her, slave.

Oras. In this distracted state
What can you say to her ?

Ofm. I know not what ;
But I must see her.

Oras. To complain, to threaten,
To make her weep, to let your easy heart
Again be soften'd by her tears, to seek,
In spite of all your wrongs, some poor pretence
To justify her conduct : trust me, sir,
'Twere better to conceal this paper from her,
Or send it to her by some hand unknown ;
Thus, spite of all her arts, thou may'st discover
Her inmost thoughts, and unsuspected trace
The secret windings of her treach'rous heart.

Ofm. Dost thou indeed believe that *Zara's* false ?
But I will tempt my fate, and try her virtue ;
I'll try how far a bold and shameless woman
Can urge her falsehood.

Oras. O my lord, I fear,
A heart like thine——

Ofm.

Osman. Be not alarm'd : alas !
 Osman, like Zara, never can dissemble :
 But I am master of myself, and know
 How to restrain my anger : yes, Orasmin ;
 Since she descends so low—here—take this letter,
 This fatal scroll, chuse out a trusty slave,
 And send it to her—go :—I will avoid her :
 Let her not dare approach—just heav'n ! 'tis she.

S C E N E VI.

OSMAN, ZARA, ORASMIN.

Zara. I have obey'd your orders, and attend you,
 But own they much surpriz'd me ; whence, my lord,
 This sudden message ? what important bus'ness—

Osman. Bus'ness of moment, madam, of much more
 Than you perhaps imagine ; I've reflected
 On our condition, Zara : we have made
 Each other wretched, and 'tis fit we come
 To explanations for our mutual int'rest :
 Perhaps my care, my tenderness, my bounty,
 The confidence my soul repos'd on Zara,
 My pride forgot, my sceptre at thy feet,
 All my officious services demanded
 Some kind return from Zara ; nay perhaps
 For ever courted, and for ever press'd
 By a fond lover, thy reluctant heart
 Might yield, mistaking gratitude for love :
 Let us be free and open to each other,
 Answer with truth to my sincerity :
 If love's supreme unconquerable pow'r
 Pleads for another, if thy doubtful heart
 Uncertain wavers 'twixt his claim and mine,
 Avow it frankly, and I here forgive thee ;
 But pause not, let me know my rival, quick,
 Now whilst I'm here, whilst I am speaking to thee,
 A moment more will be too late for pardon.

Zara. Is this a language fit for me to hear,
 Or you to speak, my lord ? I've not deserv'd it ;

But

But know, this injur'd heart, which heav'n hath try'd
 With fore affliction, cou'd defy thy pow'r,
 Did it not feel its foolish weakness still
 For Osman ; were it not for my fond love,
 That fatal passion, which I ought no more
 To cherish, never shou'd I thus descend
 To justify my conduct : whether heav'n,
 That still hath persecuted wretched Zara,
 Decrees that we shall pass our lives together,
 I know not ; but, whatever be my lot,
 By honour's sacred laws, that in my heart
 Are deeply grav'd, I swear, were Zara left
 To her own choice, she wou'd reject the vows
 Of pow'rful monarchs kneeling at her feet ;
 All wou'd be hateful to her after Osman :
 But I will tell thee more, will open all
 My foolish heart, will own it sigh'd for thee
 Long ere thy passion justify'd my own :
 Never did Zara own another master,
 Nor ever will : here, bear me witness, heav'n !
 If I offended, if I have deserv'd
 Eternal wrath ; if Zara has been guilty,
 If she has been ungrateful, 'twas for thee.

Osman. Good heav'n ! she talks of tenderness and love,
 Though I have proof before me of her falsehood ;
 O black ingratitude ! O perjur'd Zara !

Zara. What says my lord ? you seem disordered.

Osman. No :

I am not, for thou lov'st me.

Zara. That fierce tone,
 And wild demeanor, suit not with thy words ;
 Thou talk'st of love, yet fill'st my heart with terror.

Osman. Thou lov'st me ?

Zara. Can'st thou doubt it ? yet thy eyes
 Are red with anger ; what indignant looks
 They cast upon me ; fury's in thy aspect !
 Thou dost not doubt me ?

Osman. No : I doubt no longer :
 You may retire : be gone.

SCENE

S C E N E VII.

OSMAN, ORASMIN.

Os. Did'st thou observe her,
 Orasmin? how she braves it to the last!
 She glories in her crime; so artful too,
 So calmly, so deliberately false:
 But say, my friend, hast thou dispatch'd that slave,
 That I may know the worst of Zara's guilt,
 And Osman's shame?

Oras. I have obey'd your orders;
 Now I may hope you will no longer sigh
 For Zara and her treach'rous charms; henceforth
 You must behold her with indifference,
 Unless you shou'd at last repent your justice,
 And love resume his empire o'er your heart.

Os. Orasmin, I adore her more than ever.

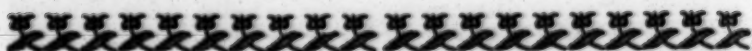
Oras. Indeed, my lord? O heav'n!

Os. Methinks I see

A dawn of hope before me; this young Christian,
 This hated rival, bold, presumptuous, vain,
 Full of his country's levity, perhaps,
 But thinks that Zara listen'd to his vows,
 One look from her might easily deceive him:
 He thinks himself belov'd; and he alone
 May be to blame, they may not both be guilty:
 She never saw that letter, I have been
 Too ready to believe myself undone.
 Orasmin, mark me—at the dead of night,
 When darkness lends her sable veil to hide
 The crimes of mortals, soon as this Nereestan
 Comes to the palace, instant let the guard
 Seize him, and bound in fetters bring him to me:
 Leave Zara free: thou know'st my heart; thou know'st
 To what excess I love; thou know'st how fierce
 My anger is, how cruel my resentment;
 I tremble but to think on it myself;

O I have

O I have been most shamefully deceiv'd ;
But woe to those who have offended Osman.



ACT V. SCENE I.

OSMAN, ORASMIN, a Slave.

Osman. They've told her of it, and she comes to meet him ;

False wretch !—remember, slave, thy master's fate
Is in thy hands : give her the Christian's letter ;
Observe her well, and bring me back her answer ;
Let me know all—but soft she's here, Orasmin,
[*To Orasmin.*]

Come thou with me, and let thy tender friendship
Teach me to hide my rage and my despair.

SCENE II.

ZARA, FATIMA, a Slave.

Zara. Who can desire to speak with wretched Zara,
At such a time, when all is horror round me ?
If it shou'd be my brother ! but the gates
Are shut on ev'ry side ; yet heav'n's high hand,
To strengthen my weak faith, by secret paths,
Might lead him to me : but what unknown slave—

Slave. This letter, madam, trusted to my hands,
Will speak my errand.

Zara. Give it me.

[*She reads.*]

Fat. Great God ! [*Aside, whilst Zara reads the letter.*]
Send down thy blessing, and deliver her
From barb'rous Osman !

Zara. Fatima, come near me,
I must consult with thee.

Fat.

Fat. You may retire ;
Be ready when we call for you : away.

[To the slave.]

S C E N E III.

ZARA, FATIMA.

Zara. Read this, my Fatima, and tell me what I ought to do : I wou'd obey my brother.

Fat. Say rather, madam, that you wou'd obey The will of heav'n ; 'tis not Nereestan calls, It is the voice of God.

Zara. I know it is ;
And I have sworn to serve him : but th' attempt Is dang'rous, to my brother, to myself, To all the Christians.

Fat. 'Tis not that alarms you,
'Tis not their danger that suggests thy fears,
'Tis love : I know thy heart wou'd judge like theirs,
Like theirs determine, did not love oppose it :
But O reflect, be mistress of thyself ;
You fear t'offend a lover, who has wrong'd,
Who has insulted you ; thou can'st not see
The Tartar's soul thro' all his boasted virtues :
Did he not threaten ev'n whilst he ador'd ?
And yet your heart preserves its fond attachment,
You sigh for Osman still.

Zara. I have no cause
To hate him, Osman never injur'd me ;
He offer'd me a throne, and I refus'd it ;
The temple was adorn'd, the rites prepar'd,
And I, who ought to have rever'd his pow'r,
Despis'd his offer'd hand, and brav'd his anger.

Fat. And can'st thou in this great decisive hour
Neglect thy duty thus to think of love ?

Zara. All, all conspires to drive me to despair :
No pow'r on earth can free me : I wou'd quit
With joy these walls so fatal to my peace,
Wou'd wish to see the Christian's happier clime,
Yet my fond heart in secret longs to stay

For

For ever here : how dreadful my condition !
 I know not what I wish, or what I ought
 To do, and only feel myself most wretched :
 O I have sad fore-bodings of my fate,
 Avert them, heav'n ! preserve the Christians, save
 My dearest brother !—when Nerestan's gone,
 I will take courage, and impart to Osman
 The dreadful secret ; tell him to what faith
 This heart is bound, and who is Zara's God ;
 I know his gen'rous soul will pity me :
 But, be as it will, whate'er I suffer,
 I never will betray my brother : go,
 And bring him here—call back that slave :

S C E N E XI.

ZARA, alone.

O God
 Of my forefathers, God of Lusignan,
 And all our race, O let thy hand direct,
 Thine eye enlighten Zara !

S C E N E V.

ZARA, a Slave.

Zara. Tell the Christian,
 Who gave thee this, he may depend on me,
 And Fatima is ready to conduct him.
 Take courage, Zara, yet thou may'st be happy. [*Aside.*]

S C E N E

S C E N E VI.

OSMAN, ORASMIN, a Slave.

Osmin. How ling'ring time retards my hasty vengeance!
He comes:—well, slave, what says she? answer me,
Speak.

Slave. O my lord, her soul was deeply mov'd:
She wept, grew pale, and trembled; sent me out,
Then call'd me back, and with a fault'ring voice,
That spoke a heart oppress'd with sorrow, promis'd
To meet him there this night.

Osmin. Away; begone; *[To the slave.]*
It is enough.—Orasmin, hence, I loath
The sight of ev'ry human being; go,
And leave me to the horrors of my soul;
I hate the world, myself, and all mankind.

S C E N E VII.

OSMAN, alone.

Where am I? gracious heav'n! O fatal passion!
Zara, Nerestan, ye ungrateful pair,
Haste, and deprive me of a life, which you
Have made most wretched: O abandon'd Zara,
Thou shalt not long enjoy—what ho! Orasmin.

S C E N E VIII.

OSMAN, ORASMIN.

Osmin. Cruel Orasmin! thus to leave thy friend
In his distress! this rival, is he come?

Orasmin. Not yet, my lord.

Osmin. Detested night, that lend'st
Thy guilty veil to cover crimes like these!

The

The faithless Zara! after all my kindness—
 † Alas! unmov'd, and with an eye serene,
 I cou'd have borne the loss of empire, kept
 My peace of mind in poverty and chains,
 But to be thus deceiv'd by her I love—

Oraf. What purpose you, my lord? may I request—

Osm. Did'st thou not hear a dreadful cry?

Oraf. My lord!

Osm. Methought I heard some noise; they're coming.

Oraf. No:

No creature stirs, the whole seraglio's wrapp'd
 In sleep: all's silent; night's dark shade—

Osm. All sleeps

But guilt, that wakes and spreads its horrors round me:
 To urge her baseness to a height like this!

O Zara, thou cou'd'st never know how much,
 How tenderly I lov'd, how I ador'd thee;
 One look from her, Orafmin, guides my fate,
 And makes her Osman blest or curs'd for ever:
 Pity my rage, away! ungrateful woman!

Oraf. And dost thou weep? did Osman weep? O
 heav'n!

Osm. 'Twas the first time I ever wept, Orafmin:
 But they are cruel tears, and death ere long
 Will follow them; thou see'st my shame, Orafmin:
 Now, Zara, weep, for they are tears of blood.

Oraf. I tremble for thee.

Osm. Tremble for my love,
 For my hard sufferings, for my vengeance: hark!
 They come; I cannot be deceiv'd; I hear them.

Oraf. Close by the palace wall they creep along.

Osm. Fly, seize Nerestan, bring him here in chains
 Before me.

SCENE

† A manifest, tho' very imperfect imitation of that fine passage
 in Shakespear's Othello.

Had it pleas'd heav'n to try me with affliction, &c.

S C E N E IX.

OSMAN, ZARA, FATIMA, in the dark, at the bottom of the stage.

Zara. Fatima, come near me.

Osman. Hark !

What do I hear ? 'tis the enchanting voice
That hath so oft seduc'd me, that false tongue,
The instrument of guilt and perfidy :
But now for vengeance—O 'tis she, 'tis Zara,
I cannot strike, [He takes out a dagger.
Th' uplifted poniard drops
From my weak hand : O heav'n !

Zara. This is the way,
Come on, support me, Fatima.

Fatima. He comes.

Osman. That word awakes my slumb'ring rage : she dies.

Zara. I tremble ev'ry step I take ; my heart
Sinks down with fear : Nerestan, is it you ?
I've waited a long time.

Osman. 'Tis I, false woman !

[Runs up to Zara and stabs her.

'Tis Osman, whom thou hast betray'd : thou dy'st.

Zara. O I am slain ; great God ! [Falling on a sofa.

Osman. I am reveng'd :

What have I done ? punish the guilty : here
I'll leave her : ha ! her lover too—now fate
Completes my vengeance.

S C E N E the LAST.

OSMAN, ZARA, NERESTAN, ORASMIN, slaves.

Osman. Bring the villian hither :

Approach, thou midnight plunderer, who com'st
To rob me of my all : now, traitor, take

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H

Thy

Thy due reward ; prepare thyself for torments,
For mis'ries, almost equal to my own :
You have giv'n orders for his punishment ?

Oraf. I have, my lord.

Ofm. A part of it thou feel'st
Already in thy heart ; I see thou look'st
Around thee for the partner of thy crimes,
The wretch who has dishonour'd me—look there.

Ner. What fatal error—ha !

Ofm. Look, there she lies.

Ner. What do I see ? my sister ! Zara dead !
O monster ! O unhappy hour !

Ofm. His sister ?

Impossible !

Ner. Barbarian, 'tis too true :
Haste, Osman, haste, and shed the poor remains
Of Lusignan's high blood ; destroy Nerestan,
The last of our unhappy race : know, tyrant,
That Lusignan was Zara's wretched father :
Within these arms the good old man expir'd :
And sad Nerestan brought his last farewell,
His dying words to Zara : yes, I came
To strengthen her weak heart, direct her will,
And turn her to the Christian faith : alas !
She had oppos'd the will of heav'n, and now
Our God hath punish'd her for loving thee.

Ofm. Did Zara love me, Fatima ?—his sister ?
Did she love Osman, say'st thou ?

Fat. Tyrant, yes :

That was her only crime, and thou hast murder'd
A lovely innocent, who still ador'd
Her cruel master ; still had hopes the God
Of her forefathers gracious wou'd receive
The tribute of her tears, and pity her ;
Wou'd have compassion on her artless youth,
Forgive her weakness, and perhaps one day
Unite her to thee : O to that excess
She lov'd thee, that her heart was long divided
'Twixt Osman and her God.

Ofm.

Osman. It is enough ;
I was belov'd : away, I'll hear no more.

Nero. Who next must fall a victim to thy rage ?
Thine and thy father's hand have spilt the blood
Of all our race, Nereftan only lives
To brave thee ; haste, and send him to that father,
Whose guiltless daughter thou hast sacrific'd :
Where are your torments ? I despise them all :
I've felt the worst thou can'st inflict upon me :
But O if yet, all savage as thou art,
Thou can'st attend to honour's voice, remember
The Christian slaves, whom thou hast sworn to free :
Speak, hast thou yet humanity enough
To keep thy promise sacred ? if thou hast,
I die contented.

Osman. Zara !

Orasmin. O sir, go in,
Let me intreat you—let Nereftan——

Nero. Speak,
Barbarian, what's thy will ?

Osman. [*After a long pause.*] Take off his chains,
Orasmin, let his friends be all set free ;
Let the poor Christians have whate'er they wish ;
Give them large presents, and conduct them safe
To Joppa.

Orasmin. Sir !

Osman. Reply not, but obey me,
I am thy sultan, and thy friend ; no more,
But do it instantly——

And thou, brave warrior, [*To Nereftan.*

Brave, but unfortunate, yet not so wretched
As Osman is, leave thou this bloody scene,
And take with thee that victim of my rage,
The dear, the guiltless Zara : to thy king,
And to thy fellow Christians, when thou tell'st
Thy mournful story, ev'ry eye will shed
A tear for thee ; all will detest the crime,
And some perhaps lament the fate of Osman :
But take this dagger with thee, which I plung'd

In Zara's breast ; || tell 'em I kill'd the best,
 The sweetest, dearest innocent, that heav'n
 Ere form'd ; this cruel hand destroy'd her : tell 'em
 That I ador'd, and that I have reveng'd her :

[Stabs himself.]

Respect this hero, and conduct him safe.

[To his attendants.]

Ner. Direct me, heav'n ! 'midst all my miseries,
 And all thy guilt, I must admire thee, Osman ;
 Nay more, thy foe Nerestan must lament thee.

|| This is plainly copied from Othello's last speech : it is observable that Mr. Voltaire, who takes every opportunity of condemning the great Shakespear, has, notwithstanding, condescended, in many places, to borrow from him.

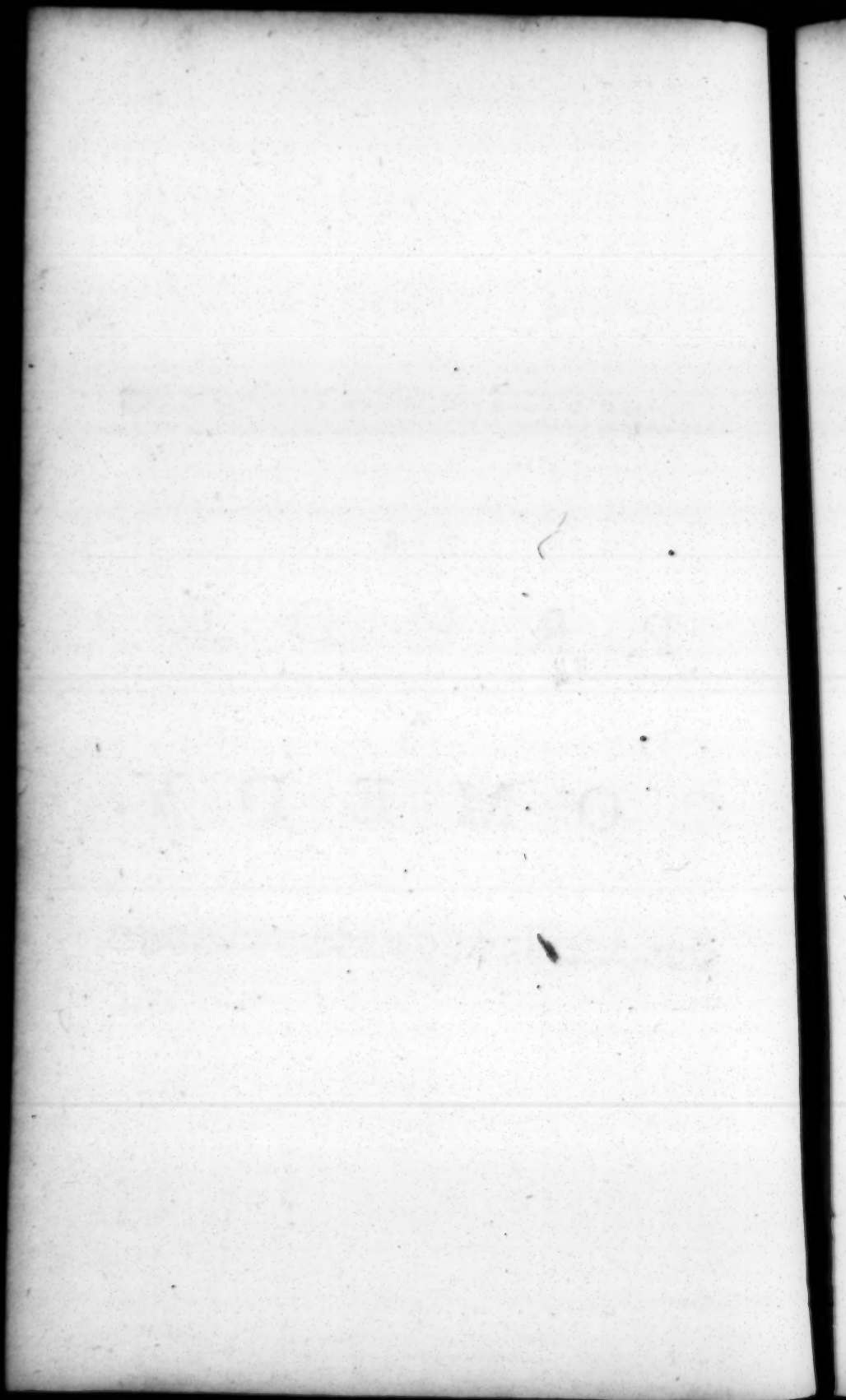
END of the FIFTH and LAST ACT.





THE
P R U D E.
A
C O M E D Y.





ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS comedy is partly imitated from an English piece, called the **PLAIN DEALER**. It does not suit very well with the French stage, the manners are too rough and bold, though much less so than in the original. The English seem to take too much liberty, and the French too little.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M. de DORFISE, a widow.

M. de BURLET, her Cousin.

COLLETTE, Chambermaid to Dorfise.

BLANDFORD, a Captain of a Ship.

DARMIN, his Friend.

BARTOLIN, a Cashier.

MONDOR, a Coxcomb.

ADINE, Niece to Darmin, and disguis'd like a young Greek.

SCENE, MARSEILLES.



T H E
P R U D E.
A
C O M E D Y.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

DARMIN, ADINE.

[ADINE, dress'd like a Turk.]

Adi. **O** My dear uncle, what a cruel voyage! what dangers have we run! and then my dress and appearance too: still must I conceal under this turban my sex, my name, and the secret of my foolish heart.

Dar. At last we are return'd safe: in good truth, niece, I pity you; but, your father dying consul in Greece, both of us left, as we were after his death, without money or friends; your youth, beauty and accomplishments but so many dangerous advantages; and, to crown all our misfortunes, that wicked Bashaw desperately in love with you; what was to be done? you were oblig'd to disguise yourself, and make your escape as fast as possible.

H 5

Adi.

Adi. Alas! I have yet other dangers to encounter with.

Dar. Dear girl, be compos'd, nor blush at what can't be prevented; embarking with me in such a hurry, and forc'd to disguise yourself in that manner, you cou'd not with any decency resume your sex on board a ship before a hundred sailors, who were more to be fear'd than your old debauch'd Bashaw: but, happily for us, every thing has turn'd out well, and we are safely arriv'd at Marseilles, out of the reach of amorous Bashaws, near your friends and relations, amongst Frenchmen, and good sort of people.

Adi. Blandford is certainly an honest man: but how dearly will his virtues cost me! that I shou'd be forc'd to return with him!

Dar. Your deceas'd father design'd you for him: he had set his heart on that match, when you were but a child.

Adi. There he was deceiv'd.

Dar. Blandford, my dear, when he is better acquainted with you, will do justice to your charms: he can never be long attach'd to a prude, who makes it her perpetual study to deceive and impose upon him.

Adi. They say she is handsome: he is constant in his nature, and will always love her.

Dar. Constant! who is so in love, child?

Adi. I am afraid of Dorfise.

Dar. She has too much intrigue about her: her prudery, they say, has a little too much gallantry in it: her heart is false, and her tongue scandalous: never fear her, my girl, deceit can only last for a time.

Adi. Ay, but that time may be long, very long: the thought makes me miserable: Dorfise deceives him, and Dorfise has found the way to please.

Dar. But, after all, niece, has Blandford really got so far into your heart?

Adi. He has indeed; ever since that day, when the two Algerine vessels attack'd us with such violence: O how I trembled for him! I think verily I was as much frighten'd for him as for you; I wish'd to be a man indeed, that I might have defended him: don't you remember,

member, uncle, it was Blandford alone who sav'd us when our ship was on fire? good heav'n! how I admir'd his courage, and his virtues! they are deeply grav'd in my heart, and never to be effaced.

Dar. A grateful heart cannot but be prejudic'd in favour of such distinguish'd virtue. I don't so much wonder at your choice: fine eyes, a noble demeanor, a good shape, and scarce thirty years of age, these are great recommendations to his—virtue: but then his strange humour, and austerity, can surely never be agreeable to you.

Adi. Why not? I am naturally serious myself, and perhaps in him may be fond even of my own faults.

Dar. He hates the world.

Adi. They say, he has reason.

Dar. His temper is too easy and complying, he relies too much on others, and is too generous; and then his moroseness makes his freedom disagreeable.

Adi. The greatest fault he has, in my opinion, is his passion for Dorfise.

Dar. That's too true; why then won't you endeavour to open his eyes, disabuse him, and shine in your true character?

Adi. How is it possible to shine in any character till we are able to please? alas! from the first day he took us both on board, I have been afraid he shou'd discover me, and now I am on shore have still the same apprehensions.

Dar. I intended to have discover'd you to him myself.

Adi. For heav'n's sake don't; but join with me in my design upon him: sacrific'd as I am to the ador'd Dorfise, I wou'd wish to remain still unknown to him, and wou'd have him continue a stranger to that victim, which he offers up to love.

Dar. What then is your design?

Adi. This very night to retire to a convent, and avoid the sight of an ungrateful man, whom I cannot help loving.

Dar. Indeed, niece, those, who go to a convent in haste, generally live to repent it at leisure: I tell you, child, time will do all things: in the mean while a
more

more dreadful misfortune calls for our attention: the very instant that this new * Du-Gué so nobly got off his ship, both his fortune and mine went to the bottom: we are both involv'd in the same calamity, and are come to Marseilles full of hope, but without a shilling! and must therefore look out for some immediate assistance: love, my dear niece, is not always the only thing to be thought of.

Adi. There, uncle, I differ from you; when we are in love, I think it is.

Dar. Time will open your eyes: love, my dear, at your age is blind, but not at mine; and where there is no fortune, and nothing but grief and poverty with it, has very few charms; only the rich and happy shou'd be in love.

Adi. You think then, my dear uncle, that now you are in distress you can have no mistress; and that your widow Burlet will forsake you immediately, as soon as she knows your circumstances.

Dar. My distress perhaps may serve her for an excuse, such my dear, is the custom of the world; but I have other cares to afflict me, I want money, and that's the most pressing calamity.

SCENE II.

BLANDFORD, DARMIN, ADINE.

Bland. So! so! in the age we live in every thing may be had of every body but money: what a heap of close embraces, kisses, fulsome compliments, false oaths, joyous welcomes, have I receiv'd from this whole city! but no sooner were they acquainted with my distress than every soul forsook me: such is this world.

Dar. It is indeed a base one: but your friends came in search of you?

Bland. Friends? know you any such? I have look'd for them, and have found a number of scoundrels of every

* Alluding to the famous Gué-Trouin, the French admiral.

every rank and degree : I have found honest men too, that live in the bosom of indolence and plenty, like their own marbles, hard, polish'd, and always wrapp'd up in themselves, and their own interests; but worthy hearts, elevated souls, who were not the slaves of fortune, such as take a generous pleasure in relieving the unhappy, these, Darmin, I have seldom, very seldom met with : there is nought but vice and corruption on every side: Mammon is the god of this world; and I wish with all my heart, that all mankind had sunk with our vessel, and was bury'd in the waves.

Dar. Be so good as to except me from your general sentence.

Adi. The world, I do believe, is false: and yet I think there is in it still a heart worthy of you; a heart that can boast of courage with sensibility, and strength with softness; which wou'd resent the unkind treatment you have met with, by loving you, if possible, but the more for it: tender in its vows, and constant in its attachment to you.

Bland. Invaluable treasure! but where is it to be found?

Adi. In me.

Bland. In thee! away, deceitful boy, am I in a condition, think you, to listen to such idle tales? pr'ythee, young man, chuse a fitter time to jest in: yes, even in this world, I know there are pure and uncorrupted hearts, who will cherish my misfortunes, and pity my distress: even in this low condition I have the happiness to reflect, that Dorcise at least knows how to love and to distinguish virtue.

Adi. Dorcise is then the idol of your heart?

Bland. She is.

Adi. You have try'd and prov'd her then?

Bland. I have.

Dar. My late brother, before he went into Greece, if I remember right, design'd my niece for you.

Bland. Your late brother, my friend, had a bad choice then: I have made a much better: I have determin'd in favour of that virtue, which, banish'd from the world,

world, hath taken up its residence in the breast of my Dorfise.

Adi. Merit like her's is rare indeed; I am astonish'd at it: but, great as it is, it cannot equal her happiness.

Bland. This youth is of a noble nature, and I love him; he takes my part even against you.

Dar. Not so much perhaps as you think: but pray tell me, how happen'd it that this Dorfise, with all her attachment and love for you, never wrote to you for a whole year?

Bland. Wou'd you have had her write to me through the air, or the post travel by sea? I have receiv'd large packets from her before now, letters wrote in such a stile too—so much truth, so much good sense, nothing affected, embarrass'd, or obscure, no false wit, nothing but the language of nature and the heart: such is the effect of real love.

Dar. You turn pale.

[*To Adine.*

Bland. What's the matter with you?

[*Looking earnestly at Adine.*

Adi. With me, sir? O sir, I have got a sad pain at my heart.

Bland. [*To Darmin.*] His heart! and what a tone too! a girl of his age wou'd have more strength and courage: I love the lad, but am astonish'd at his effeminacy: he was never made for such a voyage; he's afraid of the sea, the enemy, and every wind that blows: I caught him one day sitting down to a looking-glass: he appears to be cut out for the gay world, to fit in a box at a play-house and admire his fine form, which he seems to be mightily enamour'd with: 'tis a very Narcissus.

Dar. He has beauty.

Bland. Ay, but he shou'd beware of vanity.

Adi. You need not fear, sir, 'tis not myself that I admire: I am more likely to hate myself, I assure you; I love nothing that resembles me.

Bland. Dorfise, my friend, is after all the mistress of my fate: convinc'd as I have long been of her prudence, I gave her a promise of marriage; at parting I left every thing I had in her possession, jewels, notes, contracts,

contracts, ready money, all, thank heav'n, have I frankly trusted to my dear Dorſe; and her I conſign'd to the virtue of my friend Mr. Bartholin.

Dar. What! Bartholin the caſhier?

Bland. The ſame; a good friend, who eſteems me, and whom I love.

Dar. To be ſure you have made an excellent choice, and are extremely happy in a miſtreſs and a friend: not at all prejudic'd.

[*In an ironical tone.*]

Bland. Not in the leaſt: I am impatient at their abſence, and long to ſee them.

Adi. I can bear it no longer: I muſt go. [*Aſide.*]

Bland. You ſeem diſorder'd.

Adi. Every one has ſome miſfortunes or other; mine are heavy indeed, they overpower me, but they will ceaſe—with Blandford's.

Bland. I know not why, but his grief affects me.

[*She goes out.*]

Dar. 'Tis an amiable youth, and ſeems wonderfully attach'd to you.

Bland. Blandford's heart is not a bad one, and what fortune I have, how ſmall ſoever it be, ſhall be in common with us both; as ſoon as Dorſe returns me the money I left her, your young Adine ſhall have a part of it: I wiſh his voice was a little more maſculine, and his air more eaſy: but time and care muſt form the manners of youth: he is modeſt, ſenſible, and has juſt notions of right and wrong. I obſerv'd through the whole voyage, that he wou'd bluſh at any indecent expreſſion which my people made uſe of on board: I promiſe you I ſhall endeavour to be a father to him.

Dar. That's not what he wants of you; but come, let us go immediately to Dorſe, at leaſt we ſhall get your money of her.

Bland. True; but the unlucky Dæmon, that always accompanies me, has contriv'd to keep her in the country ſtill.

Dar. Well, but the caſhier——

Bland. The caſhier is there too; but they will both come to town, as ſoon as they know I am here.

Dar.

Dar. You are satisfy'd then that M. Dorfise is always devoted to your service.

Bland. Why shou'd she not? If I keep my faith to her, surely she may do the same by me; I have not been so foolish, as, like you, to throw away my heart on a gay coquette.

Dar. It may happen that I shall find myself despis'd, but that you know every man is liable to; I will own to you, her airy trifling humour is very different from that of her wise cousin.

Bland. But what will you do with a heart so—

Dar. Nothing at all: I shall hold my tongue, till our two fair idols make their appearance at Marseilles: apropos, here comes our friend Mondor.

Bland. Our friend? said you! he our friend?

Dar. His head no doubt is a little of the lightest, but at the bottom he is a worthy character.

Bland. Pr'ythee undeceive thyself, dear Darmin, and be assur'd, that friendship requires a firmer mind than his; fools are incapable of love.

Dar. But the wise man, does he love so much then? come, we may reap some advantage from this fool notwithstanding; as the case now stands with us, there will be no harm in borrowing his money.

S C E N E III.

BLANDFORD, DARMIN, MONDOR.

Mon. Morrow, morrow, my dears; so you are still in the land of the living: I'm glad on't, glad on't, with all my heart: good morrow to you; but pray, who is that pretty boy I saw in t'other room? whence comes he? did he come over with you? what is he, Turk, Greek, your son, your page, what do you do with him? where do you sup to night, ha? boys, where do you throw your handkerchiefs? what! are you going post to Versailles to give an account of your battles? have you got ever a patron here?

Bland.

Bland. No.

Mon. What, never made your bows at court?

Bland. No: I made my bows at sea; my services are my patrons; the only artifices I make use of; I never was at court in my life.

Mon. Then you never got any thing.

Bland. I never ask'd it; I wait till the master's eye in its own time shall find me out.

Mond. Yes: and these fine sentiments will carry you, as they do every body else, at their own time, to gaol.

Dar. We are pretty near it already, for our honour and glory has not left us a shilling.

Mon. I am inclin'd to think so.

Dar. Dear knight, let us fairly confess to you—

Mon. In two words I must inform you—

Dar. That our friend here has had a terrible loss—

Mon. That I have made, my dear, a discovery—

Dar. Of all his fortune—

Mon. Of a famous beauty—

Dar. Which he was carrying—

Mon. To whom without vanity—

Dar. By sea—

Mon. After a good deal of mysterious conduct—

Dar. In his ship—

Mon. I have the happiness to be well with.

Dar. This, sir, is a misfortune—

Mon. O 'tis a most enchanting pleasure to conquer these excessive scruples, to get the better of that modesty, that fierce angry preceptor who is always thwarting and scolding at nature: I had once an inclination for lady Burlet, for her gayety, and those pretty light airs she gives herself; but that was a foolish taste, as foolish as herself.

Dar. I'm glad to hear it.

Mon. O no, 'tis the prude I doat on: encourag'd by the difficulty, I presented my apple to the beauty.

Dar. Ay, sir, this prude, who has captivated your heart, this proud beauty is—

Mon. Dorfise.

Bland. Dorfise! is it? O you know, I suppose, who you are speaking to?

[Laughing.
Mon.

Mon. To you, my friend.

Bland. I pity thy folly, young man, and shall take care that, for the future, this lady shall never encourage such sparks as you.

Mon. Very well, my dear: but let me tell you,—your wife woman never complains when she is taken in by a fool.

Bland. Be so kind however, my friend, as to play the fool no longer with her, for know, her virtues are destin'd to make me happy; she is mine, and has promis'd to marry me; she waits with impatience till we are united.

Mon. The pretty note that my friend Blandford has there! [*To Darmin*] you say he wants a few more in his distrefs; here, Darmin.

[*He is going to give him a pocket-book.*]

Bland. Stay, take care, Darmin. [*Stopping Darmin.*]

Dar. Why, you wou'd not——

Bland. From him I wou'd not—receive any thing; when I do any man the favor to borrow of him, it shall be one whom I think worthy of it; it shall be a friend.

Mon. And am not I your friend?

Bland. No, fir: a friend indeed? an excellent friend, that wants to run away with my wife; a friend, who this very night perhaps wou'd entertain twenty coxcombs at my expence: O I know them well; these fashionable friends, these friends of the world.

Mon. That world, fir, which you grumble at, is better than all your ill humour. Your servant, fir. I am going this moment to the fair Dorfise, to split my sides with laughing at your folly. [*Is going off.*]

Bland. What say you fir? Darmin, how is this? can Dorfise be here? [*Stopping him.*]

Mon. Most assuredly.

Bland. O heav'n!

Mon. And pray what is there in that so wonderful?

Bland. In her own house?

Mon. Yes, I tell you, at Marfeilles; I met her just as I came in, returning in a violent hurry from the country.

Bland. To meet me! thank heav'n! now all my sorrows are past: [*Aside.*] come, I'll go, and see her.

Mon.

Mon. Done : with all my heart : the more fools there are, the more one laughs.

Bland. I'll rap.

[*Going to the door.*]

Mon. Rap away.

Col. Who's there ?

[*In the house.*]

Bland. 'Tis I.

Mon. 'Tis I myself.

SCENE IV.

BLANDFORD, DARMIN, COLLETTE, MONDOR.

Col. Blandford ! Darmin ! amazing : lord, fir——

[*Coming out of the house.*]

Bland. Collette !

Col. Bless me, fir, I thought you had been drown'd long ago ; you're welcome, fir.

Bland. No, Collette ; just heaven, propitious to my love, preserv'd me, that I might once more see thy dear mistress.

Col. She is this moment gone out, fir.

Dar. And her cousin too ?

Col. Yes, fir, her cousin is gone along with her.

Bland. But where, for heav'n's sake, is she gone ? where must I find her ?

Col. At the—assembly. [*Making a prudish courtesy:*]

Bland. What assembly ?

Col. Lord, fir, you are mighty ignorant : you must know, fir, there are about twenty ladies of fashion most intimately connected together to reform the age, to correct our foolish young women, to substitute in the room of that scandal which now prevails a prudent modesty and reserve, and M. Dorfise is at the head of the party.

Bland. But how happens it, Darmin, that such a coxcomb as this shou'd be suffer'd by so rigid, so severe a beauty ?

[*To Darmin.*]

Dar. O prudes love coxcombs.

Bland.

Bland. Where does she go from the assembly?

Col. That I can't tell: to do good in secret I suppose.

Bland. Secretly! that's the height of virtue; but when may I, in my turn, speak with her at home?

Mon. That, sir, you must ask me; and I believe I may venture to grant it you: you may see her, sir, as you us'd to do.

Bland. Your business, sir, is to respect her, and take care that you say nothing to her prejudice.

Dar. And her cousin too, pray where is she to be found? I was told they liv'd together.

Col. They do so: but their tastes are different, and they are seldom together. M. Burlet, with ten or a dozen young fellows, and as many pretty women, entertains herself every day, keeps a plentiful table, and goes for ever to the comedy: afterwards they dance, or play; always at her house you will meet with good suppers, new songs, and bons mots, old wines, red and white, ice-cream, liqueurs, new ribbons, Saxon monkeys, rich bagatelles, invented by * Hebert for the use of the fine ladies day and night, pleasures succeeding pleasures; scarce is there a moment left even to scandalize one another.

Mon. Ay, this, my friend, is the way to live.

Dar. But whither must I follow her?

Col. Every where; for she runs about from morning to night, and sees every thing; plays, balls, music, suppers; she is always employ'd: perhaps very late in the evening you may meet with her and her joyous companions at home, about supper-time.

Bland. If, after what I have heard, you are fond of her, my friend, you must have as little understanding as herself; is it possible to love a woman, who has all the follies of her sex put together? to be sure it will be worth your while to follow her chariot wheels, to dance after a coquette, and sigh and whine for a ridiculous creature, who thinks of nothing but her pleasures.

Dar.

* A famous dealer in trinkets at Paris.

Dar. I may be mistaken, but I cannot help thinking that a love of pleasure, and the strictest honour, may be consistent with each other ; and I am likewise of opinion, with all due deference to you be it spoken, that a prude, with all her severity of virtue, may do a great deal of good in public, and yet in secret be often good for—just nothing.

Bland. Well, well ! we shall be better judges by and by ; you shall see my choice, and I your's.

Mon. Ay, ay, by that time you return, my dears, the place will be taken.

Bland. By whom, pray ?

Mon. By me.

Bland. By you ?

Mon. I have made too good use of your absence to be afraid of your presence, I assure you : so, fare ye well.

SCENE IV.

BLANDFORD, DARMIN.

Bland. Well, what think you ? can one be jealous of such a creature ?

Dar. O, fools have fortune, you know : nothing more common.

Bland. You can never imagine, sure——

Dar. O yes : your sensible women are very fond of fools at times : but I must take my leave, to know my own fate, and see whether I am a happy or a forsaken lover.

[*He goes out.*]

Bland. [*Alone.*] Ay, ay, make haste, and get your dismissal : poor fellow ! I pity him : how happy am I to have made choice of a woman worthy of my esteem ! unfortunate as I have been, I have reason to bless the hour of my return : reason increases my passion : yes : I am resolv'd ; I will leave the world, the whole ungrateful world, for one good and worthy woman. I have had enough of hopes and fears : the port at length appears, and there will I shelter myself : what is all the world to this ?

this ? a foolish, ridiculous, fatal world ! ought I not to detest it ? there is not a friend remaining in it ; not a creature, who at the bottom really cares a farthing for one : O 'tis a vile world : if there is any love or affection to be expected, it must be from a wife ; all the difficulty is how to chuse one. A coquette is a monster one wou'd avoid, but a beautiful, a tender, and a sensible woman, is the noblest work of nature.



ACT II. SCENE I.

DORFISE, M. de BURLET, MONDOR.

Dor. **I** Must beg you, Mr. Mondor, not to indulge yourself in this excessive familiarity : it is impossible for ears so chaste as mine to suffer such liberties.

Mon. And yet you like 'em : you rate me for my impertience, but you listen to it : why, my dear, your hair is cut short on purpose, that you may hear the better.

[*Laughing.*]

Dor. Again ?

M. de Bur. Indeed I shall take his part : you are too rigid, and affect too much severity : liberty is not always licentiousness ; there is nothing indecent, in my opinion, in little sallies of innocent mirth and gayety, which we may chuse whether we will understand or not ; but your outrageous virtue wou'd shut up our mouths and our ears together.

Dor. I wou'd indeed, cousin : and moreover, I wou'd advise you to shut your doors too against some visitors, whom I frequently see here ; I have told you often enough, cousin, it will ruin your reputation : how can you suffer such a libertine crew ? Cleon, that pretty fellow, who is mighty brilliant without a spark of wit, and is always laughing at the good things he wou'd make you believe he has just said ; Damon, who, for twenty beauties

beauties that he is in love with, makes twenty madrigals as insipid as himself; and that Robin, who is always talking of himself, with the old pedant that makes every creature sick of him: then there's my cousin too, that——

Mon. Enough, enough, madam: let every body speak in his turn; and since your ladyship shews so much good nature in speaking of the world, I will endeavour to convince you I have at least as much charity as yourself, and propose giving you in three words a picture of the whole city: to begin then with——

Dor. Stop thy licentious tongue: none shou'd dare to chastise vice but persons of the strictest virtue; I cannot bear to hear libertines satirizing others who are much less culpable than themselves; for my part, what I say is from my regard to the honour of human nature, and disgust of the world, this vile world: how I do hate it!

M. de Bur. For all that, cousin, it has some attractions.

Dor. For you, I believe it has, and to your ruin.

M. de Bur. And has it none for you, cousin? do you really hate the world?

Dor. Horribly.

M. de Bur. And all the pleasures of it?

Dor. Abominably.

M. de Bur. Plays? balls?

Mon. Music? dancing——

Dor. O my dear, they are all the devil's inventions.

M. de Bur. But dress and finery? you must acknowledge——

Dor. All vanity! O how I regret every minute thrown away at my toilette! I hate to look at myself; and, of all things in nature, detest a looking-glass.

M. de Bur. And yet, my dear rigid cousin, you seem tolerably well dress'd.

Dor. Do I?

Mon. Extremely well.

Dor. Plain, very plain.

Mon. But with taste.

M. de Bur.

M. de Bur. You may say what you please, but your wife ladyship loves to please.

Dor. I love to please ? O heav'n !

M. de Bur. Come, come, be honest : have not you some small inclination to this young rattle ? he's not ill made. [Pointing to Mondor.]

Mon. O fy !

M. de Bur. Young, rich, and handsome.

Mon. Poh, pr'ythee.

Dor. O abominable ! a handsome young man is my aversion ; handsome and young ! O fy, fy.

Mon. Upon my soul, madam, I am concern'd for both of us ; the wicked woman to talk so : but pray, madam, this Blandford, who is come back without his ship, is he so rich, and young, and handsome ?

Dor. Blandford ? why, is he here ?

Mon. Certainly.

Col. O madam ! I come to tell you——

[Entering hastily.]

Dor. Hark'ee.

[Whispering Collette.]

M. de Bur. How's this ?

Dor. I thought since he took his leave of me he had been cur'd of all his faults ; to tell you the truth, I imagin'd he had been dead long ago. [To Mondor.]

Mon. No, madam, he is alive, I assure you : the pirate intends to sink me at once : he pretends to be a favourite of your's.

Dor. O Collette !

[Aside to Collette.]

Col. O madam !

Dor. Dear sir, can't you find out some means of sending him to sea again ? [To Mondor.]

Mon. O yes : with all my heart.

M. de Bur. Pray, sir, are there any news of his intimate friend and confidant, Darmin ? is he arriv'd to ?

Mon. He is, madam : the captain it seems fell in with him at some port or other : they have had a battle at sea, and now are return'd home without a stiver ; Blandford has brought with him a little Greek too, the handsomest, genteelest——

Dor. O yes : I believe I saw him just by my house : large black eyes ?

Mon.

Mon. The same.

Dor. Penetrating, yet full of softness: rosy cheeks?

Mon. He has so.

Dor. Fine hair, and teeth: something in his air that's noble and fine?

Mon. The very paragon of nature.

Dor. If his morals are good; if he is well-born and discreet, I'll see him: you shall bring him to me——tho' he is young.

M. de Bur. I must find out Darmin's lodging as soon as possible: here, la Fleur, go this minute and carry him this five hundred pounds, [*she gives a purse to la Fleur*] and tell him I expect Blandford and him to supper with me: our friends have long wish'd for his return, and none more than myself; never did I know a better creature, more honest, or ingenuous: I admire above all things his amiable complacency, and those social virtues that so strongly recommend him.

Dor. Blandford is not of his disposition: he is so serious.

Mon. So full of spleen!

Dor. True, and so jealous!

Mon. So affronting!

Dor. He is——

Mon. Very true.

Dor. Let me speak, fir; I say he is——

Mon. Yes, madam, I attend to you—he is——

Dor. He is in short a dangerous man.

M. de Bur. They tell me he has fought nobly for his king and country, and distinguish'd himself greatly at sea.

Dor. That may be, cousin, but by land he is dreadfully troublesome.

Mon. And besides he is——

Dor. True.

Mon. O those sailors have all of them such horrid principles.

Dor. They have so.

M. de Bur. But I have heard, cousin, that you formerly gave him some hopes——

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I

Dor.

Dor. Yes : but since that I have taken an antipathy to the whole world, and quitted it : I began with him : 'twas he and the world together that have made me so fearful.

S C E N E II.

DORFISE, M. de BURLET, MONDOR, COL-
LETTÉ.

Col. Madam !

Dor. Well !

Col. Mr. Blandford is come.

Dor. O heav'n !

M. de Bur. Is Darmin with him ?

Col. Yes, madam.

M. de Bur. I am heartily glad on't.

Dor. And I'm heartily sorry ; I must retire ; I wou'd fly from the whole world.

Mon. With me, I hope.

Dor. No, sir, if you please, without you. [*She goes out.*]

S C E N E III.

M. de BURLET, BLANDFORD, DARMIN, MON-
DOR, ADINE.

Dar. Permit me, madam, at length on my knees——
[*To M. de Burlet.*]

M. de Bur. O my dear Darmin, [*Running up to Darmin.*] come along, I've made a party for you to go to the ball when the comedy is over : we'll prate as we go along ; my chariot's below. And you, Mr. Solemnity, will you come with us ? [*To Blandford.*]

Bland. No : I come here, madam, on a serious affair : away, ye train of triflers, go, and pretend to pleasures which you never enjoy ; go, and be weary of one another as soon as you can : you and I, [*turning to Adine.*] will go in search of Dorfise.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

BLANDFORD, ADINE, COLLETTE.

Bland. There we shall see a woman indeed ; a woman submitting to every duty of life ; a woman, who for me has renounc'd the whole world ; and who to her faithful passion joins the most scrupulous and rigid virtue : I hope you will endeavour to recommend yourself to her.

Adi. Of that, sir, you may assure yourself ; I shall try to imitate her virtues ; her example may be the best instruction to me.

Bland. I'm glad to hear you think so : I'll introduce you to her : from this time forward I shall look upon you, Adine, as a son, whom fortune has thrown in my way, to make me amends for all her past unkindness ; it is impossible to know without loving thee ; your disposition is only too pliant and flexible ; nothing therefore can be of more service to you, than to keep company with a prudent and discreet woman, whose acquaintance will improve the goodness of your heart, and confirm you in your honesty, and love of justice, without depriving you at the same time of that sweetness and complacency, which I own I find myself deficient in : a woman of sense and beauty, who has nothing trifling or ridiculous in her, is an excellent school for a young fellow at your time of life ; it will form your mind, and direct your heart ; her house is the temple of honour.

Adi. The sooner we visit it then the better ; but her example is so uncommon, I fear I shall never be able to follow it.

Bland. Why not ?

Adi. Because I like your's better : there is something in your virtue, tho' the external appearance has too much severity in it, that charms me : it must, I am sure, be good at the bottom : you have always been my favourite, but for Dorcise——

Bland. [*Going towards the door of Dorcise's house.*] You must not indeed flatter yourself that you can at once be

able to imitate her ; but in time you may : however, let me advise you to see Dorfile, and to avoid her cousin. [*He is going in, Collette comes out, stops him, and shuts the door ; he knocks at it.*]

Col. You must not go in, sir.

Bland. Not I ?

Col. No, sir.

Bland. How's this, Blandford refus'd admittance ?

Col. My mistress, sir, is retir'd to her apartment, and wou'd be private.

Bland. I admire her delicacy, but I must go in.

Col. Pray, hear me, sir.

Bland. Not I : I will go in, and this minute too.

[*He goes in.*]

Col. Stay, sir.

Adi. I'll follow her, and see the event of this strange interview.

SCENE V.

COLLETTE, alone.

Now will he see her, and discover all : I'm frighten'd to death about it : 'twill be all over now with my poor mistress : what a foolish woman ! to stipulate this secret marriage, and give herself to such a fellow as Bartolin : what will the malicious world say ? well ; women are strange creatures, that's the truth of it : nay, and so are the men too : what excessive weakness ! to be sure my mistress is a fool ; she deceives herself and every body else ; and half her time is employ'd in finding out artifices to hide her indiscretion, and repair her reputation. She follows her inclination, and then has recourse to intrigue and management, and yet she takes no care of the main point : this is a cursed adventure for us, and a most unfortunate return : how will Blandford take the injury she has done him ? here have we no less than three husbands in the house, two of them promis'd, and the other, I believe, absolutely taken : a woman in such a case must be a little hamper'd.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

DORFISE, COLLETTE.

Col. O madam, what's to be done ?

Dor. Fear nothing ; there are ways and means to dazzle people's eyes, to delay, and put off matters ; men are easily manag'd, their weakness is our strength, and helps on our designs upon 'em : I have got myself out of the worst scrape : our disagreeable interview is over, and I have sent the good man, (God speed him,) into the country to his old crony Bartolin, who may lend him some money ; at least I shall gain time by it, and that's enough.

Col. But sure, madam, the duce was in you to sign that plaguy contract ! what had you to do with Bartolin ?

Dor. The devil, my dear, is full of spite, that's certain : that fellow persecuted me so : but we tempt, and are tempted, and the heart easily surrenders : you know we heard that Blandford wou'd never come back again.

Col. That he was dead.

Dor. I was left without any support, money, or friends, and weak withal : all owing to the weakness of my sex, Collette ; but our stars will prevail : 'tis often the lot of a beauty to marry a scab : my heart was severely attack'd.

Col. There are certain seasons very dangerous to a prude : but, if you must sacrifice to love, you shou'd have taken the chevalier, he is handsome.

Dor. O but I wanted a bit of intrigue and mystery, besides I am not fond of his character : but he is useful to me : he is my puffer, my emissary : he's a prate-apace you know, and can scatter reports about town for me that may be serviceable.

Col. But Bartolin is such a villain.

Dor. Yes, but—

Col. And for his wit, I'm sure there are no charms in that.

Dor. No: but—

Col. But what?

Dor. Fate, whim, caprice, my unhappy circumstances, a little avarice withal, and then opportunity—in short, I surrender'd, play'd the fool, and sign'd the contract. I kept, you know, Blandford's strong box, and after he was gone, gave away a little of his money for him—out of charity: who wou'd ever have thought, that, after two years, he shou'd be constant to his old flame, and come back again to look for his wife and his strong box?

Col. Every body here said he was dead, and now he is not; the fellow's a fool, and stands in his own light.

Dor. Well, since the man's alive, I must give him his jewels back: [*Resuming the Prude.*] let him take 'em: but Bartolin has got 'em to keep for me; he fancies they are mine, holds 'em fast, and is fond of them and as jealous as he is of me.

Col. So I suppose.

Dor. Husbands, jewels, virtue, and character, how to reconcile you all, heav'n knows!

SCENE VII.

MONDOR, ADINE, DORFISE.

Mon. I must drive away this powerful rival, who gives himself such airs, and despises me; positively must.

Adi. What's this? I'll listen a little. [*Coming in slowly.*

Mon. In short, I must make myself happy, and punish his insolence: 'tis you, 'tis Dorfise alone whom I adore: let old Darmin enjoy his little coquette, they are not worth our notice: but Blandford, the severe and virtuous Blandford, there I own I cou'd wish to triumph: he thinks you can refuse him nothing, because he is a man of honour and virtue: now to me these are the most disagreeable creatures in the universe; indeed, my queen, you'll soon be heartily tir'd of him.

Dor.

Dor. [*Prudishly, after looking stedfastly at Adine.*] You are mistaken, sir: I have the highest respect and esteem for Mr. Blandford.

Mon. There are those, madam, whom one may esteem, and yet laugh at, and make fools of: is not it so?

Adi. Amazing! she is constant and virtuous: doubtless she loves him: I am confounded: who wou'd have thought it? [*Aside.*]

Dor. What is he talking of?

Adi. Dorcise is faithful, and, to complete my misery, she is handsome. [*Aside.*]

Dor. [*To Mondor, after looking tenderly at Adine.*] He says, I am handsome.

Mon. There he's right: but he begins to be troublesome: hark'ee, child, I have something to say to this lady in private.

Adi. I will retire, sir.

Dor. I say, sir, you are greatly mistaken. [*To Mondor.* Stay you here, my dear. [*To Adine.*]

How dare you, sir, send him away? [*To Mondor.* Come hither, child: [*To Adine.*] he's almost ready to weep; the sweet boy! he shall stay with me: Blandford brought him to me; and from the first moment I took a fancy to him: I like his disposition.

Mon. O let his disposition alone, for heav'n's sake, and attend to me: this Blandford, madam, I know you hate him: you have often told me he is brutal, jealous——

Dor. Never, sir. [*Angrily.* What age are you? [*To Adine.*]

Adi. Eighteen, madam.

Dor. Such tender youth as thine requires the curb of wisdom to guide and direct it: vice is bewitching, temptations frequent, and example dangerous: a single glance may be your ruin; be upon your guard against women, nay and against yourself, and dread the pois'nous blast that withers the sweet flower of virtue.

Mon. Prythee, Dorcise, let the boy's flower alone: what is it to you whether it be wither'd or not? mind me, my dear.

Dor. My God ! his innocence is so engaging !

Mon. 'Tis a mere child.

Dor. What's your name, my dear, and whence come you ?

[*Coming up to Adine.*

Adi. My name, madam, is Adine ; I was born in Greece : Mr. Blandford brought me over with Damin.

Dor. 'Twas kindly done of him.

Mon. What a ridiculous curiosity ! here am I making strong love to you, and you all the while talking to a child.

Dor. Be quiet, you blockhead !

[*Softly.*

SCENE VIII.

DORFISE, MONDOR, ADINE, COLLETTE.

Col. Madam.

Dor. Well !

Col. They wait for you at the assembly.

Dor. Well : I shall be there presently.

Mon. Hang your engagement : I tell you what, my dear ; you and I will put an end to these prudish meetings, these conspiracies against love, taste, and gayety : upon my word, child, it does not become a beautiful young creature, as you are, to go about declaiming against every thing that's joyous, amongst a parcel of toothless old beldames, that meet together in their gloomy vaults to weep over the pleasures of the living : but I'll go and rout these immortal tattlers, and stop their clack with a hundred bons-mots.

Dor. For heav'n's sake, don't go and expose me there, I desire you ; positively you shall not.

Mon. Positively I will, this minute, and tell 'em you are coming

[*He goes out.*

Dor. The wild creature ! Avoid, my dear, whatever you do, such fools as these : be prudent, and discreet : make my compliments to Blandford.

[*To Adine.*

What a piercing eye !

Adi. Did you speak, madam ?

[*Turning back.*

Dor.

Dor. That sweet complexion ! that ingenuous look ! so charming ! so modest !——I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing you often.

Adi. I shall pay my respects, madam, with the greatest pleasure : madam, your servant.

Dor. Adieu, my dear child.

Adi. I don't know what to think on't : I cannot discover whether she deceives him or not ; all I know is, I love him.

S C E N E IX.

DORFISE, COLLETTE.

Dor. [*Looking after Adine.*] What said he ? I love ! love whom ? perhaps the boy has fall'n in love with me ; he talks to himself, stops, and look at me ; I have certainly turn'd his brain.

Col. He ogles you most wonderfully, and looks with such tenderness.

Dor. Is that my fault, Collette ? how can I possibly help it ?

Col. Very true, madam : but danger approaches : I am terribly afraid of this Blandford's coming back again, and dread still more the savage resentment of Bartolin.

Dor. This young Turk's mighty handsome ! do you think he is a Turk ? that an infidel can have such softness in his manner, so fine a figure ? I fancy I cou'd convert him.

Col. I'll tell you what I fancy : that when it is discover'd you are marry'd to Bartolin, your reputation will be severely handled : Blandford will storm dreadfully, and your little Turk will be of no great service to you.

Dor. Never do you fear.

Col. I have long, madam, rely'd on your prudence : but Bartolin is a jealous brute, and what's worse, he is—your husband : 'tis really a melancholy case, and indeed rather singular : the two rivals, I am afraid, will be very untractable.

Dor. O I can avoid them both : peace is the object of my wishes : it is my duty and my interest to foresee and prevent the ill consequences of a discovery ; I have friends, men of merit and fortune.

Col. Take their advice.

Dor. I intend it, immediately.

Col. But whose ?

Dor. Why, let me see,—suppose I ask this stranger—this little—

Col. Ask his advice ? the advice of a beardless boy ?

Dor. He seems to be very sensible, and if he is, why not consult him ? let me tell you, young people are the best counsellors in things of this kind : he might throw some light on my affairs ; besides, he is Blandford's friend, and I must talk with him.

Col. O to be sure, madam, 'tis quite necessary.

Dor. And as one talks over such things better at table, it wou'd not be amiss to ask him to dinner : what think you ?

Col. Softly there, madam : excuse me, but you who are so afraid of scandal——

Dor. I am afraid of nothing : I know what I am about : when once a reputation is establish'd, we may be perfectly easy about it : all the party will defend us, and cry out on our side.

Col. Ay, but the world will talk, madam.

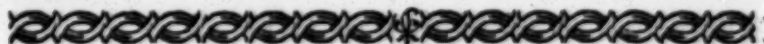
Dor. Well ! for once we'll submit to the wicked world : I'll give up this innocent dinner, and not sharpen their malicious tongues : I'll talk no more with Adine, never see him again ; and yet, after all, what cou'd they say of a child ? but to chastity and virtue I will add the appearance of them also ; will observe decency and decorum : I'll do it in my cousin's name, and beg her——

Col. An excellent contrivance ! a woman of the world has no reputation to love ; one may put her name to ten billets-doux ; she may have as many lovers, as many assignations as she pleases : nobody's offended, nobody blushes, nobody's surpris'd : but if perchance a lady of honour makes a false step, it must be carefully conceal'd.

Dor.

Dor. A false step ! I make a false step ! thank heav'n ! I have nothing to reproach myself with : to be sure I have sign'd, but I am not yet absolutely Mrs. Bartolin : he has a claim, and that's all ; and perhaps I may find a method to get rid of my master : I have an excellent design in my head : if this handsome Turk has any inclination to me, I am satisfy'd every thing will go well ; I am yet mistress of myself, and can terminate all happily : go you, and ask them to dinner : is there any harm in having an agreeable young fellow at one's table, and one that can give good advice too ?

Col. O excellent advice ! nothing can be more proper : let us immediately set about this charitable work.



ACT III. SCENE I.

DORFISE, COLLETTE.

Dor. **I**S not it he ? how uneasy I am ! hark ! somebody knocks ; he's come : Collette, hola ! Collette : 'tis he.

Col. No, madam, 'tis the Chevalier : that impertinent coxcomb, who runs in and out, skips, laughs, prates, and flutters about perpetually ; he swears he will have a tête à tête with you ; and at last, between jest and earnest, I have drove him away.

Dor. O send him to my cousin : I hate their insipid parties, their ridiculous prating and nonsense : dear Collette, preserve me from 'em.

Col. Hush ! hush ! I hear somebody coming.

Dor. O 'tis my sweet Greek.

Col. 'Tis he, I believe.

SCENE

SCENE II.

DORFISE, ADINE.

Dor. Pray come in : good morrow to you, fir : how Itremble ! pray, fir, be seated.

Adi. I'm quite confounded—I beg pardon, madam, I believe, another—

Dor. Be not alarm'd, fir : I am that other : my cousin dines abroad to-day with Blandford : you must supply his place, and stay with me.

Adi. Supply his place, madam ! who can do that ? what passion can equal his, or who can exceed him in virtue, honour, and nobleness of soul ?

Dor. You talk of him with warmth ; your friendship has life and spirit in it : I admire you for it.

Adi. 'Tis a sincere regard, but an unhappy one.

Dor. Tenderness is to the last degree becoming in youth like thine ; virtue is nothing, if it is not link'd by the sacred bonds of friendship.

Adi. Alas ! if a natural sensibility is the infallible mark of virtue, without vanity, I may boast some degree of worth and honesty.

Dor. A soul so noble deserves to be cultivated and improv'd ; perhaps I was born to be the happy instrument : many a woman has long wish'd in vain to find a tender friend, lively, yet discreet, who possess'd all the graces of youth without its flighty extravagance ; and, if I am not deceiv'd, in thee all those qualities are united : indeed they are : what lucky stars conducted thee to Marfeilles ?

Adi. I was in Greece, and the brave Blandford brought me from thence ; I have told you so twice already.

Dor. Suppose you have, I could hear it again and again : but tell me, why is that fair forehead wrapped up in a turban ? are you really a Turk ?

Adi. Greece is my country.

Dor.

Dor. Who wou'd have thought it? Is Greece in Turkey then? O how I cou'd like to talk Greek with you! why you have all the spriteliness, all the natural ease of a true Frenchman: surely nature mistook when she made you a Greek: well, I bless Providence for throwing you thus amongst us.

Adi. Here I am, to my sorrow.

Dor. And canst thou be unhappy?

Adi. Indeed I am so: but 'tis the fault of my own heart.

Dor. Ay: 'tis the heart that does all the good and all the evil in this world: 'tis that which makes us both miserable: have you any engagement then?

Adi. I have indeed: a base intriguing woman has betray'd me: her heart, like her face, is painted and disguis'd: she is bold, haughty, and full of artifice; more dangerous, because she hides her vices beneath the mask of virtue: how cruel is it that so false a heart should govern one who is but too honest!

Dor. Some faithless woman! let us be reveng'd on her: who is she? of what rank? what country? what is her name?

Adi. That I must not tell you.

Dor. Why so? I fear you have art too; the art of concealment: O you have every talent to please and to delight, young and discreet, beautiful and sensible: but I will explain myself: if, to make you amends for all the injuries you have receiv'd, you shou'd meet with a woman rich, amiable, admir'd, and esteem'd, one who had a heart constant, firm, and hitherto untouched, such as is seldom to be met with in Turkey, and seldomer perhaps in this country; if such a one cou'd be found, tell me, sweet youth, what think you? what wou'd you say to her?

Adi. I wou'd say—she meant but to deceive me.

Dor. Nay, that wou'd be carrying your distrust too far: come, come, be more confident.

Adi. Forgive me, madam; but the unfortunate, you know, are always a little suspicious.

Dor. And what, for example, may your suspicions be whilst I am talking to and looking at you?

Adi.

Adi. My suspicions are that you mean to try me.

Dor. O the malicious little rogue! how cunning he is with that air of innocence: 'tis love himself just out of his childhood: get you gone: I am in absolute danger: positively I'll see you no more.

Adi. Since 'tis your order, madam, I take my leave.

Dor. But you need not be in such a hurry to obey: come back, come back, I esteem you too much to be angry with you; but don't abuse my esteem, my sincere regard.

Adi. But you esteem Blandford: can one esteem two at the same time?

Dor. O no, never: the laws of reason and of love allow succession, but not division: you'll learn a great deal by living with me, child.

Adi. I have learn'd a great deal by what I see already.

Dor. When heav'n, my dear, makes a fine woman, it always at the same time forms a man on purpose for her: we go in search of one another for a long time, and make twenty choices before we fix on the right; we are always looking as it were for our counterpart, and seldom, very seldom, meet with it—by a secret instinct we fly after true happiness; and she [*looking tenderly at him*] who finds you, need look no farther.

Adi. If you knew what I really am, you'd soon change your opinion of me.

Dor. Never.

Adi. If once you knew me, I'm sure you wou'd think me unworthy of your care: we shou'd both be caught in the snare.

Dor. Caught, my dear, what can you mean? we're interrupted: O 'tis you, Collette.

SCENE III.

COLLETTE, DORFISE, ADINE.

Col. Ay, madam, I could not help it; but there's a more impertinent visitor still a coming; Mr. Bartolin.

[*In a violent flurry.*]

Dor.

Dor. Indeed! I did not expect him till to-morrow: the villain has deceiv'd me: return'd already!

Col. Ay, madam, and here's another unlucky accident: the chevalier, that king of coxcombs, not knowing the master of the house, is disputing with him in the street, and keeps him there in spite of his teeth.

Dor. So much the better.

Col. No, madam, so much the worse: for this blunderer, not knowing who he is talking to, laughs in his face, insists upon it that nobody shall come in here to-day; that every body shall be excluded as well as himself: that he's an impertinent rascal, and that you were engaged in your own apartment in a sober tête à tête with a pretty young fellow. Bartolin swears in wrath that he'll break the door down: Mondor splits his sides with laughing, and the other bursts with spleen.

Dor. And I in the mean time am dying with fear. O Collette, what shall I do? what hole shall we creep out at?

Adi. What can this mystery be?

Dor. The mystery is, that we are both undone: Collette, where are you going?

Adi. What will become of me?

Dor. [*To Collette.*] Hark'ee: stay: what a time was this for him to return! [*to Adine*] you must hide yourself for to-night in this closet: you'll find a black sack there, wrap yourself up in it, and be quiet. My God! it is he, that's certain.

Adi. O love, what do I suffer for thee!

[*Going into the closet.*]

Dor. Poor lad! he's desperately fond of me.

Col. Hush! hush! here he comes, your dear spouse.

SCENE IV.

BARTOLIN, DORFISE, COLLETTE.

Dor. My dear sir, heaven be with you! how late you are: you made me so uneasy, I was ready to die with fretting.

[*Meeting Bartolin.*]

Bar.

Bar. Mondor told me quite another story.

Dor. It's all a lye, every syllable he says, a horrid lye: I think I ought to be believ'd first; you know I'm sincere: the fellow loves me to madness, and is piqued at my refusal of him: his eternal clack teizes me to death: I will positively never see him again.

Bar. He seem'd to me to talk rationally enough.

Dor. Don't believe a word he says.

Bar. Well, well, I sha'nt mind him: I only came to finish our affairs, and to take some necessaries here out of the closet.

Dor. What are you doing there now? come, don't go into a body's closet. *[In a persuasive tone.]*

Bar. Why not?

Dor. *[After pausing a little.]* Why, do you know, I had the same thought as you, and have been just putting my papers in order there, so I sent for our old advocate, and we were consulting together, when he was taken with a sudden weakness.

Bar. O nothing but old age, he's very old.

Col. And so, sir, they took him in there to give him a—

Bar. Ay, I understand you.

Dor. He's retir'd a little, and has taken a dose of my syrup: I suppose by this time he is got into a nap.

Bar. That he is not, I'm sure, for I hear him walking about and coughing.

Col. And wou'd you go to disturb an advocate in the midst of his cough?

Bar. I don't like this: I'll go in.

Dor. Grant heaven he may find nothing there: hark! what do I hear! he cries out; murder! my poor advocate's killed to be sure, and I am undone: which way shall I fly? in what convent shall I hide my shame? where shall I drown myself?

Bar. *[Returning and holding Adine by the arm.]*

O ho! my dear spouse that is to be: your advocates are mighty pretty figures: you have made a good choice, pick'd him out from the whole bar: come, my old practitioner, you must disappear from this court,

court, and harangue out at the window: away with you.

Dor. My dear husband, do but hear me.

Adi. He her husband!

Bar. Come, rascal! I must begin my revenge upon you, and curry you out of your insolence. [*To Adine.*]

Adi. Alas! sir, on my knees I ask your pardon; indeed I have not merited your resentment: when you know me, you will lament my fate: I am not what I appear to be.

Bar. You appear, my friend, to be a scoundrel, a dangerous rival, and shall be punish'd: come along, sir.

Adi. Help, here, help! for heav'n's sake, sir.

Dor. He's mad with passion: help, neighbours, help!

Bar. Hold your tongue.

DORFISE, COLLETTE, ADINE.

Help, here, help!

Bar. Come, sir, get out of my house.

[*Thrusting out Adine.*]

SCENE V.

DORFISE, COLLETTE.

Dor. What an unfortunate affair this is! he'll kill the poor boy, and me too perhaps.

Col. To be sure nothing but the devil cou'd make you sign a contract with such a wretch as this.

Dor. The villain! go, Collette, this minute, to a justice, and get a warrant for him: charge him with—

Col. With what, Madam?

Dor. With every thing.

Col. Very well, madam: but which way are you going?

Dor. That I know not.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

M. de BURLET, DORFISE, COLLETTE.

M. de Bur. Why, cousin, cousin, what's the matter?

Dor. O cousin?

M. de Bur. One wou'd have thought you'd been robb'd and murther'd, or that your house had been o' fire: what a roaring and a noise here is, my dear!

Dor. O cousin, I'll tell you the affair; but, for heaven's sake, keep my secret.

M. de Bur. I'm no keeper of secrets, cousin; but I can be as discreet as other folks upon occasion: what is this mighty affair of yours?

Dor. The affair's a very bad one, I assure you; in short—I am—

M. de Bur. What?

Dor. Promis'd in marriage, cousin.

M. de Bur. I know it, my dear—to Blandford: so much the better: I think it's a good match: I wish you happy and intend to dance at your wedding.

Dor. O my dear, you're mistaken: Bartolin, who is now swearing below stairs, is the man.

M. de Bur. Indeed! so much the worse: I don't approve of your choice; but if it is done, it can't be help'd: is he absolutely your husband to all intents and purposes?

Dor. Not yet: the world is an utter stranger to it; but the contract has been made a great while.

M. de Bur. O cancel it by all means.

Dor. It will set the wicked world a talking: O cousin, I have been sadly treated. This vile man, you must know, found me with a young Turk, who was shut up in my closet; not with any bad design.

M. de Bur. O no to be sure! pray, cousin, is not this a little out of character for a prude?

Dor. Not at all: it is a little faux-pas, a small weakness only.

M. de

M. de Bur. Well, I am glad you own so much : our faults are sometimes useful : this slip may soften your temper ; perhaps for the future you will be less severe.

Dor. Severe or not, for heaven's sake, cousin, get me out of this scrape, and save me from the tongue of scandal, and the violence of Bartolin ; if possible, deliver the poor lad, who is scarce eighteen. O here comes my spouse.

S C E N E VII.

BARTOLIN, DORFISE, M. de BURLET.

M. de Bur. What an uproar are you making here for nothing, only on a slight suspicion, to put all her friends in such a taking : fy, Mr. Bartolin.

Bar. I ask pardon : indeed, ladies, I am ashamed, and sorry I conceiv'd such suspicions ; but appearances were strong against her : how indeed cou'd I ever have imagin'd that this young fellow, for so I thought him, was only a girl in disguise ?

Dor. An excellent come-off.

M. de Bur. Mighty well indeed ! so my lady here took a girl for a boy ?

Bar. The poor child is in tears still : by my troth I pity'd her : but why cou'd you not have told me who she was ? why take a pleasure in trying my temper, and making me angry ?

Dor. Droll enough this ! [*Aside*] he has play'd his part well, however, to persuade Bartolin he is a girl, and get off so well : 'twas a charming contrivance : the dear little, rogue ! but love is a great wit. [*To Bartolin.*] Now, thou abominable jealous wretch, answer me, how dare you thus affront my virtue ? the poor little innocent confided in me ; my cousin here knows how warmly I espous'd her cause, and protect'd her honour : you ought to have had a loose coquette, a jilt, for your wife ; you deserve no better, and I hope you'll meet with one : I'll expose you, sir, tho' I know it will
cost

cost me dear, but I am determin'd at all events to have the contract annul'd.

Bar. I know upon these occasions women must cry: but pr'ythee, my dear, don't cry so much: come, let us be friends; and let me desire you, madam, [*To Dorfise*] to say nothing about this affair: I have some very good reasons for concealing it.

Dor. Be silent, dear cousin, and save me; on no account mention it to the good Mr. Blandford.

[*To M. de Burlet.*]

M. de Bur. You may depend on't, I never will.

Bar. We shall be greatly oblig'd to you.

SCENE VIII.

DORFISE, M. de BURLET, BARTOLIN, COLLETTE.

Col. Mr. Blandford is below, madam, and says he must come up.

Dor. O dreadful! this is my luck! always cross'd—

Bar. But after all—

M. de Bur. Nay, nay, after what you have seen, and being guilty of so much injustice as you have, you have no business to give yourself airs: try what you can do—to obey.

SCENE IX.

DORFISE, M. de BURLET.

M. de Bur. I'm glad to see this affair has turn'd out so well however: to be sure your intended spouse is rather short-sighted: but between you and I, cousin, 'twas a strange choice this: and then to take a boy for a girl, at his age: well husbands will be husbands still I find, always jealous, always laugh'd at, and led by the nose.

Dor.

Dor. I don't understand this language, madam, nor have I deserv'd this treatment from you: surely you don't really believe, that a young fellow was lock'd up in my closet? [*Prudishly.*]

M. de Bur. Indeed but I do, my dear.

Dor. What! when my husband told you to the contrary?

M. de Bur. Perhaps your spouse might be mistaken; he may have bad eyes: besides, cousin, did not you tell me yourself here in this very place, that a young fellow—

Dor. Ridiculous! what I, child, I tell you so? never: do you think I have lost my senses? indeed, cousin, you shou'd take more care what you say: when once a woman's tongue has got a habit of talking thus lightly, and spreading scandalous stories, invented merely to calumniate and injure people, there is no end of it, but 'tis a hundred to one but she repents of it, sometime in her life.

M. de Bur. I calumniate, I scandalise you, cousin?

Dor. You, madam: I vow and swear——

M. de Bur. Don't swear cousin.

Dor. But I will.

M. de Bur. Fy, my dear, fy: come come, I shall believe no more of the story than I ought to believe: take a husband, cousin, two if you please; deceive 'em both as well as you can; make young fellows pass for girls; on the strength of your character govern twenty families, and be call'd a woman of virtue; with all my heart, it will give me no uneasiness, you are extremely welcome: nay, I admire your management and discretion: 'tis your pride and glory to deceive the world, and mine to divert myself with it, without descending to falsehood: I live for my pleasure: adieu, my dear, my worldly weakness bends in all humility to your profound wisdom: dear cousin, adieu.

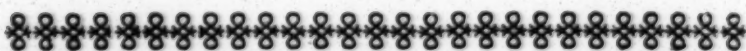
SCENE

SCENE X.

DORFISE, COLLETTE.

Dor. Now will that foolish creature go and pull me to pieces: my honour and my character are gone: the libertines will laugh at my expence: Dorfise will be the common butt of every satyrist: my name will be hitch'd into a hundred rhymes, and furnish matter for every sing-song in town: Blandford will believe the scandal, and Bartolin will cry for vengeance: how shall I stop the tongues of calumny? two husbands and a lover in one day! what a deal one has to go through to be a prude! wou'd not it be better after all to fear nothing, to affect nothing, and be a plain woman of honour? well: one day or other I'll try to be one.

Col. At least, madam, let us take care to appear as such; when we do all we can, you know, we have done enough; and she is not always a woman of virtue who wishes to be so.



ACT IV. SCENE I.

DORFISE, COLLETTE.

Dor. **O** Collette, I'm inevitably ruin'd: wou'd I cou'd see young Adine; he is so kind, and so sensible! he wou'd tell me every thing they do and say, and I might take my measures with him accordingly: my affairs wou'd at least be more settled, and I shou'd know what I have to depend on; what shall I do, Collette?

Col. See him, and talk to him freely.

Dor. Right: towards evening: O Collette, if success wou'd but crown this mysterious affair, if I cou'd preserve

serve my reputation, and keep my lover, if I cou'd but keep one of them, I shou'd be happy.

Col. Ay, ay, one of them is enough o' conscience.

Dor. But have you taken care the chevalier shall be here presently; that he shall come privately; and, according to custom, let every body know it?

Col. O never fear, he'll be here I warrant you; he's always ready, and fancies you've a passion for him.

Dor. He may be of service: wise men in their designs, the better to compass their ends, always make use of fools.

SCENE II.

DORFISE, MONDOR, COLLETTE.

Dor. My dear chevalier, come along: I have something to say to you.

Mon. You know, madam, I am the lowest of your subjects, your humble slave, your chevalier: what must I do? tilt for you? fight for you? die for you? spite of all your cruelty, I am ready: speak, madam, and it is done.

Dor. And am I indeed so happy as to have charm'd the agreeable Mondor? but do you love me as you ought to love me, with that pure and refined passion?

Mon. I do; but pr'ythee, my dear don't be so formal; beauty is most engaging when it is easy and tractable: the excess of virtue is disgustful: in short, my dear, you want a little of my correction.

Dor. What think you of young Adine?

Mon. Who, I? nothing at all? his figure makes me perfectly easy, I assure you: Mars and Hercules were never jealous of Adonis.

Dor. Well: I love your confidence, and shall reward it: the malicious world perhaps will tell you I am secretly engag'd; but 'tis false; believe 'em not; a hundred lovers have ogled, and teiz'd me, but I was born to be subdued by you, and you alone.

Mon.

Mon. That's more indeed than I cou'd flatter myself with the hopes of.

Dor. To convince you of it, I promise to marry you as soon as ever you please: be prudent, and be happy.

Mon. Happiness is enough for me, prudence we'll leave to another opportunity: but do not, my dear charmer, delay it: time you know is precious.

Dor. But then one thing I must insist on from you.

Mon. I am your husband, madam, and you may command me.

Dor. You must take care that none of my troublesome visitors intrude on me to night: the proud, peevish Blandford, my cousin, and her fool Darmin, with all their train of impertinent relations, must go somewhere else, for I positively will not be disturb'd by them; then, chevalier, at midnight, and not before, I'll meet you in the arbour; bring your lawyer with you, and we'll sign and seal.

Mon. Transporting thought! how I shall triumph over that fool Blandford! well, I will so laugh at, so ridicule the poor creature.

Dor. Be sure you don't forget to be at my window a little before midnight: away: be discreet.

Mon. O if Blandford did but know this!

Dor. Away, begone, or we shall be surpris'd.

Mon. Adieu, my dear wife.

Dor. Adieu.

Mon. I go with rapture, to wait for the dear happy hour when prudery shall be sacrificed to love.

SCENE III.

DORFISE, COLLETTE.

Col. Well, if I can guess at your design, hang me: 'tis a riddle to me.

Dor. I'll explain it to you: I've made Mondor promise to tell nothing, but I know very well he'll tell all, that's enough, his tale will justify me: Blandford will think every thing mere calumny and not know a word

word of the truth: to day at last I shall be safe; and after to-morrow, if success crowns my designs, I shall be afraid of nobody.

Col. Delightful! I'm glad to hear you say so, and yet you put me in a horrid fright: are you sure, ma'am, the plan's well laid? and that you won't, after all, fall into the snare yourself, which you laid for others? for heav'n's sake, take care what you do.

Dor. O Collette, Collette, how strangely one slip brings on another! we are led aside from error to error, and from crime to crime, till our heads turn round, and we fall down the precipice: but I have one string still to my bow; I am sure of young Adine: the Chevalier comes at twelve, but my little lover will be before hand with him: let him be here at nine, Collette, d'ye hear me?

Col. I'll take care of that, madam.

Dor. They take him for a girl, by his air, his voice, and his beardless chin; therefore tell him I'd have him dress himself in girl's cloaths.

Col. An excellent scheme! heav'n prosper it!

Dor. The boy may serve, you know, to dispel one's melancholy: but the great point I wou'd bring about is to throw all the scandal upon my cousin, and to make Blandford believe that Adine came here upon her account: let him fall a dupe to his own credulity.

Col. The fittest instrument you cou'd have chose: for he believes every thing that's bad of her, and every thing that's good of you: imagines he sees clearly, and at the same time is stark blind: I have taken care already to confirm him in the opinion, that our little coquette is in love with the boy, and not you.

Dor. To be sure lies are bad things; but they are mighty serviceable sometimes, and do a great deal of good.

SCENE IV.

BLANDFORD, DORFISE.

Bland. O tempora! O mores! dreadful corruption indeed! to desire him to visit her! the poor simple ingenuous youth, she wants to draw him into a passion for her, and employs all the little subtleties, all the snares which love makes use of to catch unwary hearts.

Dor. Well, but after all, Mr. Blandford, she may not have carry'd it so far as we imagine: I wou'd not do her so much injury as to suppose it: one shou'd not think evil of one's neighbour: to be sure things were in a fair way, but you know our French coquettes.

Bland. Yes, yes, I know 'em.

Dor. The moment a young man appears with an air of innocence and simplicity, they are after him.

Bland. Yes: yes: vice, above all things, is fond of seducing virtue: but how, Dorfise, can you bear people of such character?

Dor. As patiently as I can, sir: but this is not all.

Bland. Why, what, pray—

Dor. O, sir, you have another tale to hear: do you know, these excellent contrivers wou'd endeavour to persuade the world truly, that the young fellow was brought in for me?

Bland. For you?

Dor. Yes: they say I wanted to seduce him.

Bland. Well, that to be sure is ridiculous to the last degree: for you!

Dor. Ay, for me, and that this pretty youth—

Bland. That was really a fine invention.

Dor. A better than they think O, they have play'd me a great many such tricks: O Mr. Blandford, if you knew what I suffer! They'll tell you too I'm to be marry'd to that fool, Mondor, and this very night.

Bland. O my dear Dorfise! the more thou art wounded by the envenom'd darts of slander and calumny,
with

with the warmer zeal shall this heart, that adores thee, defend thy injur'd and unspotted virtue.

Dor. You are deceiv'd, indeed you are.

Bland. No, Dorfise : I think I know myself a little, and I wou'd have laid my life on't I saw your cousin ogling Adine this very day : let me tell you, it requires sense and understanding to be honest : I never knew a fool with a good heart : virtue itself is nothing but good sense : I am sorry for Darmin, because I really love and esteem him ; 'twas against my advice he ventur'd to embark in such a leaky vessel.

SCENE V.

BLANDFORD, DORFISE, DARMIN,
M. de BURLET.

M. de Bur. What ? always dismal and solemn, full of spleen and rancour, grumbling and growling at all mankind, that either don't hear you, or, if they do, only laugh at your folly ? dear virtuous fool, finish thy soliloquies, and come along with me : I have just bought a few trinkets, you shall have some of them : come, we're going to Mondor's, he's to treat us ; I have order'd him to get music, to purge your melancholy humours ; and after that, my dear, I'll take you by the hand, and dance with you till to-morrow morning, [*to Dorfise*] ay, and you shall dance too, Mrs. Prim.

Dor. Prythee, hair-brains, hold thy tongue : such things wou'd not become me ; and besides, madam, you shou'd remember——

M. de Bur. None of your besides I beg you, madam : every thing is forgot ; my philosophy is, remember nothing.

Dor. You see now whether I was right or not : your servant, sir : she really grows too scandalous, I must be gone. [*To Blandford.*]

Bland. O stay, madam.

Dor. No, sir : 'tis impossible : it hurts my soul, my honour——

M. de Bur. My god ! talk less of honour, madam, and regard it more.

[*Dorise goes out.*]

Dar. She seems out of humour : I fancy my friend Blandford begins to find her out.

[*To M. de Burlet.*]

M. de Bur. O all the world must talk of it : but Darmin and I say nothing.

Bland. I fancy not indeed : you wou'd hardly confess to me such folly and extravagance.

Dar. No, sir ; we wou'd not make you so unhappy.

M. de Bur. We know your humour too well, to make you still more miserable by reproaching you with your misfortunes.

Bland. Go, go, hide yourselves both, and die with shame.

M. de Bur. Why shou'd we disturb at once the quiet of your whole life, by exposing Dorise, and making yourself a common laughing stock ? no, sir ; I own I am light and airy, free, and familiar, but have yet some goodness in me, and am no busy-body : I shou'd see you deceiv'd a thousand times by your friend, and duped by your wife, hear your adventures chaunted thro' every street, nay sing 'em myself, before ever you shou'd hear a word from me : to tell you the truth, the two great ends I have in view, are peace and pleasure ; I love myself, and therefore hate all idle reports and scandalous tales, true or false : live and be happy is my motto : and he, I think, is a great fool who makes himself miserable by the follies of others.

Bland. Light unthinking woman ! 'tis not the affairs of others, 'tis your own, madam, that now calls for your attention.

M. de Bur. Mine, sir ?

Bland. Yes, madam : 'tis you who are to blame, and highly too ; you who seduc'd a virtuous youth, and then endeavour'd to lay the shameful intrigue on the innocent Dorise.

M. de Bur. O the scheme is excellent : 'tis more than I expected : and so 'twas I, who sometimes——

Bland. Yes, madam, you yourself.

M. de Bur. With Adine !

Bland. Yes.

M. de Bur.

M. de Bur. I am in love with him then ?

Bland. Most certainly.

M. de Bur. And 'twas I that put him in the closet ?

Bland. It was : the thing was clear enough.

M. de Bur. O mighty well ! a lucky thought indeed !
I admire the contrivance : O my dear madman, what a mixture thou art of honesty and folly ! the very model of Don-Quixote, brave, sensible, knowing, and virtuous, yet in one point an absolute fool ; but, for heav'n's sake, take care how you recover your senses : believe me, 'twou'd be the worst thing you ever did in your life : well, folly has its advantages : adieu : come, Darmin,

SCENE VI.

BLANDFORD, DARMIN.

Bland. Stay Darmin, I have your honour and your interest at heart : I am angry, and I have reason to be so ; in short, you must quit this artful woman, get out of the snare she has laid for you, despise her, or break with me.

Dar. The alternative is a cruel one : I own to thee, I love my friend, and I love my mistress : but how can thy hard heart judge so uncharitable of all human kind : can't you see that this web of perfidy is woven by a base designing woman ? that she deceives you, and wou'd lay the shame and ignominy on another ?

Bland. Dost not thou see, fool as thou art, that a vile scandalous abandon'd wretch has chosen thee for her tool, her butt, her stalking horse, that, like an idiot, you bite at the hook ; and that she is only trying to see how far she can exercise her tyranny over your easy heart ?

Dar. Easy as it is, let me intreat you, ask the only witness who is able to determine it : I have sent for young Adine, he will tell you the whole truth of the affair.

Bland. O yes: I doubt not but the jade has tutor'd her young parrot well, and taught him his lesson: but let him come, let him endeavour to deceive me; I shall not believe him: I see your intention, I see plainly enough, you want, by every artifice, to blacken and destroy my dear Dorfise, to draw me off to you niece, whose charms you have so often boasted: but you need not give yourself the trouble, for I shall never think of her.

Dar. As you please for that: but indeed, Blandford, I pity your folly: to experience the falsehood of a perfidious woman, may perhaps be many a poor man's fate, and must be borne with; but really to lose one's money is a serious affair: this Bartolin, this noble friend of yours, has he refunded?

Bland. What business is that of yours?

Dar. I beg pardon, I thought it was; but I am mistaken: here comes Adine: I'll retire: let me inform you, if you distrust him, you are more in the wrong than you think for: he has a noble heart, and you may one day know he is not what perhaps he might appear to be.

SCENE VII.

BLANDFORD, ADINE.

Bland. So! I see they are all resolutely bent to lend me by the nose: Dorfise, thank heav'n, is of another nature; she says nothing, but submits to her unhappy fate without appearing too deeply affected by it; too confident, or too timid; she avoids me, and hides herself in retirement; such is always the behaviour of injur'd innocence. Now, young man, tell me the truth in every particular with sincerity; nature seems in you pure and uncorrupted; you know I love you; do not abuse my growing inclination to you, but consider that the happiness of my life is concern'd in this affair.

Adi. Indeed, sir, I love you too well to abuse or to deceive you.

Bland.

Bland. Tell me then every thing as it pass'd.

Adi. First then, I assure you, that Dorise——

Bland. Stop there, you mean her cousin, I'm sure you do.

Adi. I don't indeed, sir.

Bland. Well, go on.

Adi. Dorise then, I say, introduc'd me by a private door to her chamber.

Bland. She did, but 'twas not for herself.

Adi. It was.

Bland. No, child: 'twas M. de Burlet, you know it was.

Adi. I tell you, sir, Dorise was positively in love with me.

Bland. The little rascal!

Adi. The excess of her passion surpris'd and shock'd me: I was far from being pleas'd with it: nay, I assure you, I was angry at her: I was incens'd at her falsehood; and told her, if I had been like her, I shou'd have been more faithful.

Bland. The villain! how they have prepar'd him! Well, what follow'd?

Adi. After this she grew loud and vehement, when on a sudden a violent knocking was heard, and who shou'd come in but her husband.

Bland. Her husband! O very well! what a ridiculous story! the chevalier, I suppose.

Adi. No: a real husband, I assure you; for he was extremely brutal and extremely jealous: he threaten'd to murder her, call'd her false, perfidious, infamous, and abandon'd: I expected to have been kill'd too, for he was in a dreadful rage with me, tho' for what reason I know not: I was forc'd to fall on my knees and intreat him to spare my life: I'm sure I tremble yet at the thoughts of him.

Bland. The little coward! but this husband, what was his name?

Adi. I don't know indeed.

Bland. A fine trick this!—what sort of a man was he? describe him to me.

Adi. He seem'd to me, as far as the horrid fright I was in permitted me to observe him, a fellow of a very disagreeable aspect, fat and short, like a turn-spirit, flat-nos'd, with a large chin, hunch-back'd, a yellow tann'd complexion, grey eye-brows, and an eye that look'd like—the devil.

Bland. An excellent picture! how can I recollect him by all this? Yellow, you say, tann'd, grey, short and fat: who can it be? but you only mean I see to laugh at me.

Adi. Try, then, sir, and prove me: to night, this very night, she has appointed again to meet me.

Bland. Another appointment with M. de Burlet?

Adi. Still, sir, you will mistake the person.

Bland. Not with Dorcise?

Adi. With her indeed.

Bland. With her?

Adi. With her, I tell you.

Bland. Amazing! you confound me! an assignation with Dorcise this night?

Adi. This very night, sir; if you please, you may see me there: I am to go in girl's clothes, which she herself sent me; and to go in by a private door to your mistress, sir, your faithful, prudent, discreet mistress.

Bland. This is too much; I cannot, will not bear it: which ever way I consider it, I fear she is disloyal: may I depend upon you?

Adi. My heart is too deeply concern'd for your interest and happiness to be insincere: yours I know is truth itself: indeed, Mr. Blandford, I love, and am faithful to you.

Bland. The little flatterer!

Adi. Can you doubt my honour?

Bland. Away! I——

SCENE

SCENE VIII.

BLANDFORD, ADINE, MONDOR.

Mon. Come, come, you make the guests wait, and stop the course of pleasure: why, you never wanted mirth and good company more in your life: to be sure your affairs go badly enough; you have lost your mistress, but never mind it: but you shou'd not have set up for my rival; I told you I shou'd gain the victory, and so I have.

Bland. What wou'd you inform me of, friend?

Mon. Nay, nothing of consequence, only that I'm going to be marry'd to your mistress, that's all.

Bland. O very well! I know that already.

Mon. What! did you know that I was to carry the lawyer with me, and that——

Bland. Yes, yes, I know it all, your whole plot, and I don't care a farthing about it: [*Aside.*] This boy has not learn'd half his lesson: hark'ee, fir, [*To Adine.*] This appointment and yours are a little incompatible: what say you to this, fir? does it strike you? either you endeavour to deceive me, or are deceiv'd yourself: but you are young in the school of vice; a heart like thine, simple and unexperienc'd, is an excellent instrument in the hands of a villain: alas! thou can'st here but to make me miserable.

Adi. This is too much, fir: take care lest your harsh temper, and ill-plac'd resentment, shou'd destroy that pity which still pleads for you; 'tis that alone which keeps me here: but go, run headlong to your ruin; listen to nobody, suspect your best friend, and believe only those who abuse you; accuse and affront me; but learn to respect a heart that, with regard to you, was never a deceiver, or deceiv'd.

Mon. Hear you that, fir? but thou art choked with spleen; even children laugh at you; pr'ythee learn to be wiser: come along with me, and drown all your cares in Greek wine: come away, boy.

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SCENE.

SCENE IX.

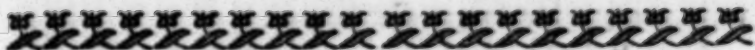
BLANDFORD, ADINE.

Bland. Stay, Adine : thou hast mov'd me : thy concern alarms me : you know my humour, my folly, but you know my heart too, 'tis honest, and has only too much sensibility : you see how I am distress'd ; can you take a cruel pleasure in laughing at my misfortunes ? tell me truth, I conjure thee.

Adi. I know your heart is good, nor is mine less pure : never till this hour did I but once put on disguise ; but with regard to Dorfise and yourself I have been honest and sincere : I own I lament in you that fatal passion which has blinded you, but 'tis a passion I know that will seduce the wisest of us all ; love alone can set every thing right ; that has taken away your sight, and that shou'd restore it to you. *[She goes out.]*

Bland. [Alone.] What can he mean ? love alone shou'd restore it ; he once put on a disguise, and yet he is sincere ! I don't understand it ; certainly 'tis all a trick, a plot only to make a fool of me : Mondor, Darmin, her cousin, Bartolin, Adine, Dorfise, Collette, all the world in short conspires with my own foolish heart to make me miserable and ridiculous : this vile world, which I despise as it deserves, is nothing but a confus'd heap of folly and wickedness : but if in this tempest of the soul I must say whether I will be knave or fool, my choice is made, and I bless my lot : O heaven ! let me be still a dupe, but O preserve my virtue !

A C T



ACT V. SCENE I.

BLANDFORD, alone.

WHAT will become of me ? where shall I fly for safety ? my misfortunes follow one another without end : I go to sea, a pirate attacks and sinks my vessel : I come to land, and there I am told that an ungrateful woman, whom I ador'd, is a worse pirate still : a strong box, which I had left behind, is my only resource : a rascal promises to give it me back, and puts me off from time to time, and he perhaps may prove the third corsair : I am waiting for Adine, and he is not come yet ; every body provokes, and every body avoids me : all perhaps the consequence of my unhappy temper, that made me suspicious of every friend, and open to every enemy : if it be so, I am wrong, I own I am, and fortune has a right to sport thus with me : of what service is my melancholy virtue but to make me more sensible of my miseries, and more conscious of having deserv'd them ? this boy too not come yet !

SCENE II.

BLANDFORD, M. de BURLET passing cross the stage.

Bland. Stay, madam, I beseech you stay, and calm, if possible, this tempest of my soul ; for heav'n's sake, one word with you : where are you running to ?

[Stopping her.]
M. de Bur. To supper : to be merry : I'm in haste, sir.

Bland.

Bland. I know I affronted you, and you have reason to be angry ; but forget and forgive.

M. de Bur. O I have forgiven you a great while ago : I'm not angry, I assure you.

Bland. You are too good : will your gaiety for once deign to interest itself in my distress ?

M. de Bur. Gay as I am, Mr. Blandford, I assure you, I have friendship, esteem, and pity for you.

Bland. You are sorry then for my unhappy fate.

M. de Bur. Your unhappy fate ! yes : but more for your unhappy temper.

Bland. You are honest however, and truth, you know, has always charms for me : but say, is Darmin a faithful friend, or does he deceive me ?

M. de Bur. Darmin loves you, and possesses all your virtues with more softness and complacency.

Bland. And Bartolin ?

M. de Bur. You want me to answer for Bartolin too, and for all the world I suppose : excuse me ; Bartolin, for aught I know, is an honest cashier ; what reason have you to suspect him ? he's your friend, and the friend of—Dorise.

Bland. Of Dorise ? but tell me freely ; cou'd Dorise, cou'd she entertain a passion for a boy, and in so short a time too : and what is this lawyer that Mondor talks of : public report says he's to marry her.

M. de Bur. Public reports shou'd be despis'd.

Bland. I am this moment come from her : she has sworn eternal truth to me : she has wept : love and grief were in her eyes : did they bely her heart ? is she false ? and is Adine—you laugh at me.

M. de Bur. I laugh at your ridiculous figure : come, come, take courage, man : as for the boy, take my word for it, he'll never forsake you ; 'tis impossible.

Bland. You give me comfort : the coxcomb, Mondor, is not worth my care ; Dorise loves me, and I love her for ever.

M. de Bur. For ever ? that's too much.

Bland. Not where one is belov'd ; but then this Adine must be a base calumniator, must have a bad heart.

M. de Bur.

M. de Bur. O no: be assur'd, he has a noble mind, candid, honest, and ingenuous, the happy favourite of indulgent nature.

Bland. You mock me, madam,

M. de Bur. Indeed I don't: 'tis truth.

Bland. Now am I plung'd again in darkness and uncertainty; you sport with my distress, and take pleasure in tormenting me: Dorise, or he, has deeply injur'd me: one of them, you must allow, has been a traitor to me; is it not so?

M. de Bur. That may be.

[Laughing.

Bland. If it is, you see what reason I had——

M. de Bur. And after all it may be so: I accuse nobody.

Bland. I'll be reveng'd.

M. de Bur. Ridiculous! be less angry and more discreet: come, I'll tell you what, will you take the only sure method, one that I shall recommend to you?

Bland. I will.

M. de Bur. Then leave this dark mysterious affair to itself; make no bustle about it, but turn every thing, as I do, to a jest: take up your money of Bartolin, and live along with us without care or solicitude: never go too deeply into things, but float with me upon the surface; know the world, and bear with it; the only way to enjoy is to skim lightly over it: you look upon me as a giddy creature, and so I am; but let me tell you, the only matter of importance in this life, is to enjoy ourselves and be happy.

SCENE III.

BLANDFORD, alone.

Bland. To be happy! good! excellent advice! wou'd not one think now it were an easy thing, that one had only to wish for happiness, and to possess it? wou'd it were so! and why shou'd it not? why shou'd I take so much pains to make myself unhappy? shall I suffer this boy, and Darmin, and Mondor to distract me
thus?

thus? no: I'll follow this giddy girl's advice; she's gay, but honest and sincere: Dorcise loves me, and I am yet secure: for the future, I'll see nothing, listen to nothing: they wanted to alarm me with this Adine, to hood-wink, and then to lead me where they pleas'd; but I'm not to be caught in their snares: Darmin is wrapp'd up in that niece of his, and wou'd fain palm her upon me; but I detest her: ha! what's this?

[*Adine appears in woman's cloaths at the further end of the stage.*]

Yonder's that unhappy youth who has caus'd me so much uneasiness: he looks exactly like a girl: how genteel his air, and so easy too, as if the cloaths had been made for him! the face too is truly female.

SCENE IV.

BLANDFORD, ADINE.

Aai. Well, sir, you see I'm dress'd for my part, and now you will know the truth.

Bland. I desire to know nothing more about it; I have heard enough; leave me, I beseech you; I have alter'd my sentiments, and hate this disguise; go, go, put on your own habit, and trouble yourself no more with this affair.

Adi. What say you, sir? at last then I perceive it is not in my power to change your unalterable heart, or to reverse your cruel fate; alas! you know not the weight of grief that hangs upon me, but ere long you will see the fatal effects of it: farewell! I leave you, sir, for ever.

Bland. What can this mean? he weeps! speak, I intreat thee, tell me, what interest hast thou in my happiness or misery?

Adi. My interest, sir, was yours: till this moment never knew I any other: but I have been to blame, I try'd to serve you; 'tis not the first time.

Bland. The innocence of his look, his modest confidence, his voice, his air, his open and ingenuous behaviour,

haviour, still plead for him—but the hour is past, when this intrigue you told me of was to take place; I was to have been an eye-witness of it.

Adi. Hark! I hear a door opening: this is the place, and this the time, when you shall be convinc'd who it is that loves you.

Bland. Just heav'n! is it possible?

Adi. It is.

Bland. Stay you here then: but 'tis all a trick, an artifice: Dorfise! no——

Adi. Hush! I hear a noise: it comes towards us: I'm frighten'd, 'tis so dark.

Bland. Fear nothing.

Adi. Be silent: for I hear somebody coming: hush! away.

SCENE V.

ADINE, BLANDFORD,

[on one side of the stage, which is suppos'd to be quite dark. DORFISE on the other, on tiptoe.]

Dor. I thought I heard my charmer's voice; how punctual he is! the dear boy.

Adi. Hush!

Dor. Hush, is it you?

Adi. Yes: 'tis I: still faithful to my love: 'tis I who come here to prove that I have deserv'd a better return for all my tenderness.

Dor. I cannot give thee a better: you must forgive me; I wou'd not have made you wait so long, my dear, but Bartolin, whom I did not expect, is return'd; in spite of all my care, he has got a fit of jealousy upon him.

Adi. Perhaps he is afraid of meeting Blandford here: he is a dangerous rival.

Dor. Very likely indeed: O my dear, what with Blandford, and my vile husband, I'm dreadfully hamper'd: I don't know which I hate most: in short, I'm sure of nothing, but that I love you.

Adi.

Adi. You hate Blandford then heartily?

Dor. I think I do: fear naturally begets aversion.

Adi. Well, but your other spouse——

Dor. O him I never think of.

Bland. How I cou'd wish now——

Adi. Hush! hush! [*Softly to Blandford.*]

Dor. I have been consulting, my dear, about the contract: it certainly might be set aside: I wish it were, and then I might have hopes of another match.

Adi. What, of marrying me?

Dor. I think the best way wou'd be for us to part for a time, to avoid scandal; and then meet, and be united by a sacred and a lasting tie.

Adi. A lasting tie! come then: let us begone: but how are we to live?

Dor. Your prudent foresight charms me: I always admir'd your discretion: you must know then, the fighting Mr. Blandford, a hero at sea, but an arrant blockhead at home, when he left Marseilles, to go after the pirates, most cordially and most affectionately consign'd to me, with his heart, his money and jewels also: as I was, like him, a novice in these affairs, I put them into the hands of my other husband; of him I must endeavour to recover 'em, and assist Blandford: the poor man is honest, and shou'd live: away: let us part immediately, and take care nobody follows us.

Adi. But what will the world say?

Dor. O never heed it: I was afraid of its scandal before I lov'd: but now I despise it: I'll be a slave to none but thee.

Adi. But me?

Dor. I'll go immediately and get this strong box: that you know will be very necessary to us both: stay here, I'll be back in an instant.

SCENE VI.

BLANDFORD, ADINE.

Adi. Well, fir, what think you now?

Bland.

Bland. Never did I behold such base such black ingratitude, such infernal falsehood; and yet, Adine, you see the force of powerful virtue, how its lively instinct speaks even in the most corrupted heart.

Adi. How, sir, in what?

Bland. You see the perfidious wretch durst not rob me of all; she talk'd of assisting me.

Adi. O yes, you are mightily oblig'd to her: have you never another strong box to entrust with this virtuous lady? *[Ironically.]*

Bland. Nay, do not laugh at me, Adine, nor plant such daggers in my heart.

Adi. I meant to heal and not to wound it: but can you yet admire her?

Bland. No: she is loathsome: falsehood has robb'd her of every charm.

Adi. If, sir, I free you from her snares, may I flatter myself, that whilst you detest her vices, you will not forget my honest service.

Bland. No, gen'rous youth! I look on you as my son, and my deliverer, the guardian-angel, whom heaven hath sent down to preserve me; the half of all I have will be but a poor reward for thy care and fidelity.

Adi. You must not know at present what reward I aspire to: but can your heart refuse the request which Darmin perhaps may make to you?

Bland. Ha! thou hast remov'd the veil: I see, I see it all; but who, what art thou? are you indeed what you resemble?

Adi. Whatever I am, for heaven's sake, be silent now: I hear Dorise coming this way. *[Smiling.]*

Dor. *[With the strong box.]* I've got the box, propitious love has favour'd my design: here, my dear, take it: away: let us be gone: have you got it fast?

Bland. Yes.

[Taking it from her, and counterfeiting the voice of Adine.]

Dor. Come along then.

SCENE

SCENE VII.

BLANDFORD, DORFISE, ADINE, BARTOLIN.
a sword in his hand, in the dark, he runs up to Adine.

Bar. Stop, villain, stop! art thou not satisfy'd with robbing me of my wife, but must run away with my money too?

Adi. Help! murther! help! [To Blandford.

Bland. Take the box.

[Fighting with one hand, and holding out the box to Adine with the other.]

SCENE VIII.

BLANDFORD, DORFISE, ADINE, BARTOLIN,
DARMIN, M. de BURLET, COLLETTE,
MONDOR, with a napkin and bottle in his
hand. Flambeaux.

M. de Bur. What's the matter here! hui! hui! what, fighting too!

Mon. Hold, hold, gentlemen, what is all this noise about?

Adi. You're not wounded, fir, I hope?

[To Blandford.

Dor. Ha!

[In confusion.

M. de Bur. What is the cause of this fray? gentlemen, pray inform us.

Bland. [To Bartolin, after disarming him.] O nothing, madam; only this worthy gentleman, and trusty treasurer, this honest keeper of the strong box, has robb'd me of my mistress and my fortune: by the assistance of
this

this amiable youth, I have detested their infamous designs, and recover'd my money: go, sir, I leave you to your miserable fate, to this virtuous lady: know, my friends, I have unmask'd their treacherous hearts; this villain——

Bar. Your servant, sir.

Mon. A ha! what comes of my assignation now?

Bland. O sir, they made a fool of you.

Mon. And of you too, I think.

Bland. They did so indeed: I feel it yet.

Mon. Treated you like an idiot.

Bland. Dreadful, horrible! O prudery, how I detest thee!

Mon. Well, come, let us think no more of prudes, wives, or women, but go in and drink about; that's my way of drowning misfortunes: the man that drinks is never melancholy.

M. de Bur. I'm really sorry my cousin Dorise shou'd behave so foolishly: to be sure 'twill set the world a talking, but 'twill be all over soon, and there's an end of it.

Dar. Come, Blandford, banish sorrow, and for the future take care of a prude: but do you know this boy, who has restor'd to you your honour and fortune, and sav'd you from the dangerous precipice, which your blind passion had led you to the brink of?

Bland. But——

[*Looking at Adine.*]

Dar. 'Tis my niece.

Bland. O heav'n!

Dar. The very woman whom I so often propos'd to my deluded friend; who, deceiv'd by a faithless wretch, despis'd and hated all but her.

Bland. How cou'd I injure, by an unkind refusal, so many charms! such beauty and such virtue!

Adi. You never wou'd have known me, if chance and my own constancy had not remov'd the veil of black ingratitude, and sav'd you from yourself.

Dar.

Dar. You owe every thing, your fortune, and your reason to her gen'rous love: what then is she to hope for in return? what will you do to make her amends?

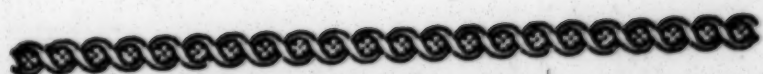
Bland. Adore her.

[*Kneeling to Adine.*

Mon. This turn of affairs is as agreeable as it is surprising: we shall all be gainers by the change: away.

END of the FIFTH and LAST ACT.





MAHOMET.

A

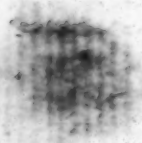
T R G E D Y.



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ADVERTISEMENT

FROM THE

E D I T O R.

THE literary world will perhaps think themselves oblig'd to me for publishing the tragedy of *Mabomet*, which had been barbarously mangled in two surreptitious editions. I can venture to assure the reader, that it was written in 1736, and a copy of it then sent by the author to the *Prince Royal*, now *King of Prussia*, who at that time cultivated the *Belles Lettres* with astonishing success, and continues to make them his principal amusement.

I was at *Lisle* in 1741, where *Mr. de Voltaire* came to pass a few days: there was then the best company of actors in the town that had ever been in *Provence*, who represented this piece highly to the satisfaction of a very numerous audience. The governor and the intendant were several times present at the performance. A tragedy written in so new a taste, and on so delicate a subject, treated with such judgment and discretion, induc'd many prelates to have it acted in a private house by the same persons. Their opinion confirm'd that of the public. The author was at the same time so happy as to get his manuscript presented to * one of the first men in the church, and indeed in all Europe, who supported the weight of public affairs with firmness, and judg'd concerning works of genius with true taste, at an age when few men have, and still fewer preserve
their

* Cardinal Fleury.

their wit and delicacy. He pronounc'd that the piece was written with all proper decorum and circumspection and that it was impossible to handle with more prudence so dangerous a subject; but that with regard to the poetry, there were many things in it that wanted correction: these the author, to my knowledge, afterwards retouch'd with the greatest care. This was likewise the opinion of another eminent personage of equal rank, and of equal abilities.

At length this excellent performance, which had been licens'd according to form in many other places, was exhibited at *Paris* on the ninth of *August*, 1742: a whole box was fill'd with the principal magistrates of the city: the ministers were also present, and all were of the same opinion with the excellent judges above-mention'd. There were however some persons at the first representation who disapprov'd of it: whether it was, that in the hurry of the action they did not sufficiently attend to the gradual process of it, or that they were little vers'd in stage matters, * they seem'd shock'd at *Mahomet's* ordering a man to commit murder, and making use of his religion to stir up an innocent youth, the instrument of his crimes, to an assassination. These gentlemen, struck with the horror of the action, did not sufficiently consider, that this murder is represented in the tragedy as the most atrocious of all crimes, and that indeed it was morally impossible it shou'd be otherwise! the truth was, they saw indeed but one side, the usual method which men take to deceive themselves. And as they consider'd that side only, it was no wonder they shou'd take offence, which a little more attention wou'd easily have remov'd: but in the first heat of their zeal they cry'd out, it was a dangerous performance, and fit only to produce *Ravallacs* and *Jacques Clements*. A most extraordinary

* The true state of the case was that the Abbé *des Fontaines* and some others as malicious as himself, decry'd the tragedy of *Mahomet*, as a wicked and scandalous performance: the affair made so much noise, that the prime minister, Cardinal *Fleury*, who had long before read and approv'd of it, was notwithstanding oblig'd to advise the author to withdraw it.

traordinary piece of criticism which these gentlemen no doubt are by this time heartily ashamed of. This would in effect be to affirm, that *HERMIONE* teaches us to assassinate kings, *ELECTRA* to kill our mothers, *CLEOPATRA* and *MEDEA* to slay our own children: that *HARPAGON* makes misers, the *GAMESTER* gamblers, and *Tartuffe* hypocrites. The censure of *Mahomet* would carry with it even more injustice than this, because the iniquity of that false prophet is represented in a light more odious and detestable than any of the vices or follies satyrised in those performances. The tragedy was written directly in opposition to the *Ravailleurs* and *Jacque Clements*, in so much that, as a person of excellent judgment lately observed, if *Mahomet* had been written in the time of *Henry III.* and *Henry IV.* it might have saved both their lives. Would one think it possible that the author of the *HENRIADE* would ever have met with such a reproach, he who has so often in that poem, and in other parts of his works, lifted up his voice, not only against such crimes, but against all those pernicious maxims which are the causes of them? The more I read that writer's works, the more have I always found the love of public good their distinguishing characteristic: every part of them inspires horror and detestation of rebellion, persecution and fanaticism.

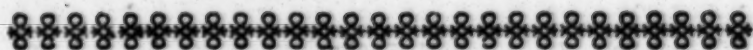
Is there a good and worthy citizen who would not adopt all the maxims of the *Henriade*? Does not that poem inspire us with the love of virtue? *Mahomet* appears to me to be written in the same spirit, and this I am persuaded the author's greatest enemies will frankly acknowledge.

He soon perceived that a formidable party was raised against him: some of the most violent amongst them had got the ear of a few great men, who, not having seen the piece themselves, believed every thing that these gentlemen thought proper to report concerning it. The celebrated *Moliere*, the glory of *France*, was once in nearly the same condition, when his *Tartuffe* was first exhibited: he had immediate recourse to *Lewis the great*, who knew and loved him. The authority

of that monarch soon put an end to the sinister and malevolent misrepresentations of *Tartuffe*: but times are chang'd: that protection, which is given to arts in their infant state, cannot be expected to continue after those arts have been cultivated for a length of time: besides that one man may not have interest to obtain that which another had procur'd with ease: some instruments must be set to work, some discussions made, some new examinations pass'd through, before any thing can be done in his favor. The author therefore thought it most adviseable to withdraw his piece, after the third representation, in hopes that time wou'd get the better of prejudice, which must inevitably * happen amongst a people so sensible and judicious as our own. It was put in the public papers, that the tragedy of *Mahomet* had been stopp'd by order of the government, which was an absolute falsehood: no such order was ever given; and the first men in the kingdom, who had seen this tragedy, unanimously concurr'd in their admiration of it. Some persons having hastily transcrib'd a few scenes from the actors parts, two or three imperfect editions crept into the world: it is easy to see how much they differ from the true work which I have here given. Prefix'd to this tragedy are several interesting pieces; one of the most curious amongst them, in my opinion, is a letter written by the author to his majesty the *king of Prussia*, on his return through *Holland*, after a visit to him. In papers of this kind, which were not originally design'd for the public, one sees the real sentiments of men: I flatter myself they will afford the same pleasure to every true philosopher which they gave me in the perusal.

To

* What the editor foresaw in 1742 did actually come to pass in 1751, when this tragedy was represented with universal applause. Cabal and persecution gave way to the voice of the public, and perhaps the more readily as many by this time began to feel some remorse at having forc'd a man to quit his country, who had labour'd so successfully for the honour of it.



To his MAJESTY
The KING of PRUSSIA.

SIR,

Rotterdam, January 20, 1742.

I AM at present, like the pilgrims of *Mecca*, turning their eyes perpetually towards that city after leaving it, as I do mine towards the court of *Prussia*. My heart, deeply penetrated with the sense of your majesty's goodness, knows no grief but that which arises from my incapacity of being always with you. I have taken the liberty to send your majesty a fresh copy of *Mabomet*, the sketch of which you have seen some time ago. This is a tribute which I pay to the lover of arts, the sensible critic, and above all, to the philosopher much more than to the sovereign. Your majesty knows by what motive I was inspir'd in the composition of that work. The love of mankind, and the hatred of fanaticism, two virtues that adorn your throne, guided my pen: I have ever been of opinion, that tragedy shou'd correct, as well as move the heart. Of what consequence or importance to mankind are the passions or misfortunes of any of the heroes of antiquity, if they do not convey some instruction to us? It is universally acknowledg'd, that the comedy of *Tartuffe*, a piece hitherto unequall'd, did a great deal of good in the world, by shewing hypocrisy in its proper light; and why therefore shou'd we not endeavour in a tragedy to expose that species of imposture which sets to work the hypocrisy of some, and the madness of others? Why may we not go back to the histories of those antient ruffians, the illustrious founders of superstition and fanaticism, who first carry'd the sword to

the altar to sacrifice all those who refus'd to embrace their doctrines?

They who tell us that these days of wickedness are past, that we shall never see any more *Barcochebas*, *Mahomets*, *Johns of Leyden*, &c. And that the flames of religious war are totally extinguish'd, in my opinion, pay too high a compliment to human nature. The same poison still subsists, though it does not appear so openly, some symptoms of this plague break out from time to time enough to infect the earth: have not we in our own age seen the prophets of *Cevennes* killing in the name of God those of their sect, who were not sufficiently pliant to their purposes?

The action I have describ'd is terrible; I don't know whether horror was ever carry'd farther on any stage. A young man born with virtuous inclinations, seduc'd by fanaticism, assassinate an old man who loves him; and whilst he imagines he is serving God, is, without knowing it, guilty of parricide: the murder is committed by the order of an impostor, who promises him a reward, which proves to be incest. This, I acknowledge, is full of horror; but your majesty is thoroughly sensible, that tragedy shou'd not consist merely of love, jealousy, and marriage: even our historians abound in actions much more horrible than that which I have invented. *Seid* does not know that the person whom he assassinate is his father, and when he has committed the crime, feels the deepest remorse for it; but *Mezeray* tells us, that at *Milan* a father kill'd his son with his own hand on account of religion, and was not in the least sorry for it. The story of the two brothers *Diaz* is well known; one of them was at *Rome* and the other at *Allemagne*, in the beginning of the commotions rais'd by *Luther*: *Bartholomew Diaz*, hearing that his brother embrac'd the opinion of *Luther* at *Francfort*, left *Rome* on purpose to assassinate him, and accordingly did so. *Herrera*, a *Spanish* author, tells us, that *Bartholomew Diaz* run a great bazard in doing this, but nothing intimidates a man of honour guided by honesty. *Herrera*, we see, brought up in that holy religion, which is an enemy to cruelty, a religion which teaches long-

long-suffering and not revenge, was persuaded that honesty might make a man an assassin and a parricide: ought we not to rise up on all sides against such infernal maxims? these put the poniard into the hand of that monster who depriv'd *France* of *Henry the Great*: these plac'd the picture of *James Clement* on the altar, and his name amongst the saints: these took away the life of *William* prince of *Orange*, founder of the liberty and prosperity of his country. *Salcede* shot at and wounded him in the forehead with a pistol; and *Strada* tells us, that *Salcede* wou'd not dare to undertake that enterprize till he had purify'd his soul by confession at the feet of a Dominican, and fortify'd it by the holy sacrament. *Herrera* has something more horrible, and more ridiculous concerning it. *He stood firm*, (says he) *after the example of our saviour Jesus Christ, and his saints*. *Balthasar Girard*, who afterwards took away the life of that great man, behav'd in the same manner as *Salcede*.

I have remark'd, that all those who voluntarily committed such crimes were young men like *Seid*. *Balthasar Girard* was about twenty years old, and the four *Spaniards*, who had bound themselves by oath with him to kill the prince, were of the same age. The monster who kill'd *Henry III.* was but four-and-twenty, and *Pol-trot*, who assassinated the great *Duke of Guise* only twenty five: this is the age of seduction and madness. In *England* I was once a witness how far the power of fanaticism cou'd work on a weak and youthful imagination: a boy of sixteen, whose name was *Shepherd*, engag'd to assassinate king *George I.* your majesty's grandfather by the mother's side. What cou'd prompt him to such madness? the only reason to be assigned was, that *Shepherd* was not of the same religion with the king. They took pity on his youth, offered him his pardon, and for a long time endeavour'd to bring him to repentance; but he always persisted in saying, it was better to obey God than man: and if they let him go, the first use he made of his liberty should be to kill the king: so that they were oblig'd at last to execute him as a monster, whom they despaired of bringing to any sense of reason.

I will venture to affirm, that all who have seen any thing of mankind must have remarked, how easily nature is sometimes sacrificed to superstition. How many fathers have detested and disinherited their children? How many brothers have persecuted brothers on this destructive principle? I have myself seen instances of it in more than one family.

If superstition does not always signalize itself in those glaring crimes which history transmits to us, in society it does every day all the mischief it possibly can: dis-unites friends, separates kindred and relations, destroys the wise and worthy by the hands of fools and enthusiasts: it does not indeed every day poison a *Socrates*, but it banishes *Descartes* from a city which ought to be the asylum of liberty, and gives *Jurieu*, who acted the part of a prophet, credit enough to impoverish the wise philosopher *Bayle*: it banishes the successor of the great *Leibnitz*, and deprives a noble assembly of young men that crouded to his lectures of pleasure and improvement: and to re-establish him heaven must raise up amongst us a royal philosopher, that true miracle which is so rarely to be seen. In vain does human reason advance towards perfection, by means of that philosophy which of late hath made so great a progress in *Europe*: in vain do you, most noble prince, both inspire and practice this humane philosophy: whilst in the same age wherein reason raises her throne on one side, the most absurd fanaticism adorns her altars on the other.

It may perhaps be objected to me, that, out of my too abundant zeal, I have made *Mahomet* in this tragedy guilty of a crime which in reality he was not capable of committing. The count de *Boulainvilliers*, some time since, wrote the life of this prophet, whom he endeavoured to represent as a great man, appointed by providence to punish the christian world, and change the face of at least one half of the globe. *Mr. Sale* likewise, who has given us an excellent translation of the alcoran into English, wou'd persuade us to look upon *Mahomet* as a *Numa* or a *Theseus*. I will readily acknowledge, that we ought to respect him, if, born a legitimate prince, or call'd to government by the voice of the people, he had

instituted

instituted useful and peaceful laws like *Numa*, or like *Theseus*, defended his countrymen: but for a driver of camels to stir up a faction in his village; to associate himself with a set of wretched *Coracites*, and persuade them that he had an interview with the angel *Gabriel*; to boast that he was carry'd up to heaven, and there receiv'd part of that unintelligible book which contradicts common sense in every page; that in order to procure respect to this ridiculous performance he shou'd carry fire and sword into his country, murder fathers, and ravish their daughters, and after all give those whom he conquer'd the choice of his religion or death; this is surely what no man will pretend to vindicate, unless he was born a *Turk*, and superstition had totally extinguish'd in him the light of nature.

Mahomet, I know, did not actually commit that particular crime which is the subject of this tragedy: history only informs us, that he took away the wife of *Seid*, one of his followers, and persecuted *Abusophan*, whom I call *Zopir*; but what is not that man capable of, who in the name of God, makes war against his country? It was not my design merely to represent a real fact, but real manners and characters, to make men think as they naturally must in their circumstances; but above all it was my intention to shew the horrid schemes which villany can invent, and fanaticism put in practice. *Mahomet* is here no more than *Tartuffe* in arms.

Upon the whole I shall think myself amply rewarded for my labour, if any one of those weak mortals, who are ever ready to receive the impressions of a madness foreign to their nature; shou'd learn from this piece to guard themselves against such fatal delusions; if after being shock'd at the dreadful consequences of *Seid's* obedience, he shou'd say to himself, why must I blindly follow the blind who cry out to me, hate, persecute all who are rash enough not to be of the same opinion with ourselves, even in things and matters we do not understand? what infinite service wou'd it be to mankind to eradicate such false sentiments! A spirit of indulgence wou'd make us all brothers; a spirit of persecution can create nothing but monsters. This I know is your majesty's

jeſty's opinion : to live with ſuch a prince, and ſuch a philoſopher, wou'd be my greateſt happineſs ; my ſincere attachment can only be equall'd by my regret ; but if other duties draw me away, they can never blot out the reſpect I owe to a prince, who talks and thinks like a man, who deſpiſes that ſpecious gravity which is always a cover for meaneſs and ignorance : a prince who converſes with freedom, becauſe he is not afraid of being known ; who is ſtill eager to be inſtructed, and at the ſame time capable himſelf of inſtrutting the moſt learned and the moſt ſagacious.

I ſhall, whiſt I have life, remain with the moſt profound reſpect, and deepeſt ſenſe of gratitude, your majeſty's, &c. &c. &c.

* A LETTER from Mr. VOLTAIRE

T O

POPE BENEDICT XIV.

Moſt bleſſed father,

YOUR holineſs will pardon the liberty taken by one of the loweſt of the faithful, though a zealous admirer of virtue, of ſubmitting to the head of the true religion this performance, written in oppoſition to the founder of a falſe and barbarous ſect. To whom cou'd I with more propriety inſcribe a ſatire on the cruelty and errors of a falſe prophet, than to the vicar and repreſentative of a God of truth and mercy ? your holineſs will therefore give me leave to throw at your feet both the piece and the author of it, and humbly to requeſt your proteſtion of the one, and your benediſtion of the other ; in hopes of which, with the profoundeſt reverence, I kiſs your ſacred feet.

Paris, Auguſt 17, 1745.

The

* Theſe three letters are tranſlated from the Italian.

The ANSWER of Pope BENEDICT XIV.

To Mr. VOLTAIRE.

*Benedictus P. P. dilecto filio salutem & Apostolicam
Benedictionem.*

THIS day sev'nnight I was favor'd with your excellent tragedy of *Mahomet*, which I have read with great pleasure: Cardinal *Passionei* has likewise presented me with your fine poem of *Fontenoy*. Signor *Leprotti* this day repeated to me your † distich made on my retreat. Yesterday morning Cardinal *Valenti* gave me your letter of the 17th of *August*. So many are the obligations which you have conferr'd on me, for which I am greatly indebted to you; for all and every one of them, and to assure you that I have the highest esteem for your merit, which is universally acknowledg'd.

The distich has been publish'd at *Rome*, and objected to by one of the *literati*, who, in a public conversation, affirm'd that there was a mistake in it with regard to the word *hic*, which is made short, whereas it ought to be always long. To which I reply'd, that it may be either long or short; *Virgil* having made it short in this verse,

Solus hic inflexit sensus, animumque labantem.

And long in another,

Hic finis Priami fatorum, hic exitus illum.

L 5

The

† The distich is as follows:

Lambertinus hic est, Romæ decus, & pater orbis,
Qui mundum scriptis docuit, virtutibus ornat.

The answer I think was pretty full and convincing, considering that I have not look'd into *Virgil* these fifty years. The cause, however, is properly yours; to your honour and sincerity therefore, of which I have the highest opinion, I shall leave it to be defended against your opposers and mine, and here give you my apostolical benediction. *Datum Romæ apud sanctam Mariam majorem die 19 Sept. Pontificatus nostri anno sexto.*

A LETTER of THANKS

FROM

Mr. VOLTAIRE to the POPE.

THE features of your excellency are not better express'd on the medal you were so kind as to send me, than are the features of your mind in the letter which you honour'd me with: permit me to throw at your feet my sincerest acknowledgments: in points of literature, as well as in matters of more importance, your infallibility is not to be disputed: your excellency is much better versed in the *Latin* tongue than the *Frenchman* whom you condescended to correct: I am indeed astonish'd how you cou'd so readily appeal to *Virgil*: the popes were always rank'd amongst the most learned sovereigns, but amongst them I believe there never was one in whom so much learning and taste united.

Agnosco rerum dominos, gentemque togatam.

If the *Frenchman* who found fault with the word *hic* had known as much of *Virgil* as your excellency, he might have recollected a verse where *hic* is both long and short.

Hic

Hic vir hic est tibi quem promitti sæpius audis.

I cannot help considering this verse as a happy presage of the favors conferr'd on me by your excellency. Thus might *Rome* cry out when *Benedict XIV.* was rais'd to the supremacy : with the utmost respect and gratitude I kiss your sacred feet, &c. &c.



DRA-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MAHOMET.

ZOPIR, Scheik of Mecca.

OMAR. } General and second in command to
Mahomet.

SEID,
PALMIRA, } Slaves to Mahomet.

PHANOR, Senator of Mecca.

Company of Meccans.

Company of Mussulmans.

SCENE, MECCA.



M A H O M E T.

A

T R A G E D Y.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

Z O P I R, P H A N O R.

Zop. **T**Hink'st thou thy friend will ever bend the
knee

To this proud hypocrite ; shall I fall down
And worship, I, who banish'd him from Mecca ?
No : punish me, just heav'n, as I deserve,
If ere this hand, the friend of innocence
And freedom, stoop to cherish foul rebellion,
Or aid imposture to deceive mankind !

Pba. Thy zeal is noble, and becomes the chief
Of Ismael's sacred senate, but may prove
Destructive to the cause it means to serve :
Thy ardor cannot check the rapid pow'r
Of Mahomet, and but provokes his vengeance :
There was a time when you might safely draw
The sword of justice, to defend the rights
Of Mecca, and prevent the flames of war
From spreading o'er the land ; then Mahomet

Was

Was but a bold and factious citizen,
 But now he is a conqueror, and a king :
 Mecca's impostor at Medina shines
 A holy prophet ; nations bend before him,
 And learn to worship crimes which we abhor.
 Ev'n here, a band of wild enthusiasts, drunk
 With furious zeal, support his fond delusions,
 His idle tales, and fancy'd miracles :
 These spread sedition thro' the gaping throng,
 Invite his forces, and believe a God
 Inspires, and renders him invincible.
 The lovers of their country think with you,
 But wisest counsels are not always follow'd ;
 False zeal, and fear, and love of novelty
 Alarm the croud ; already half our city
 Is left unpeopled ; Mecca cries aloud
 To thee her father, and demands a peace.

Zop. Peace with a traitor ! coward nation, what
 Can you expect but slav'ry from a tyrant !
 Go, bend your supple knees, and prostrate fall
 Before the idol, whose oppressive hand
 Shall crush you all : for me, I hate the traitor ;
 This heart's too deeply wounded to forgive :
 The savage murth'rer robb'd me of a wife
 And two dear children : nor is his resentment
 Less fierce than mine ; I forc'd his camp, pursued
 The coward to his tent, and slew his son :
 The torch of hatred's lit up between us,
 And time can ne'er extinguish it.

Pba. I hope
 It never will ; yet shou'd'st thou hide the flame,
 And sacrifice thy griefs to public good :
 What if he lay this noble city waste,
 Will that avenge thee, will that serve thy cause ?
 Thou hast lost all, son, brother, daughter, wife,
 Mecca alone remains to give thee comfort,
 Do not lose that, do not destroy thy country.

Zop. Kingdoms are lost by cowardice alone.

Pba. As oft perhaps by obstinate resistance.

Zop. Then let us perish, if it be our fate.

Pba. When thou art almost in the harbour thus !
 To brave the storm, is false and fatal courage : Kind

Kind heav'n, thou see'st, points out to thee the means
To soften this proud tyrant ; fair Palmira,
Thy beauteous captive, brought up in the camp
Of this destructive conqueror, was sent
By gracious heav'n, the messenger of peace,
Thy guardian angel, to appease the wrath
Of Mahomet ; already by his herald
He has demanded her.

Zop. And wou'd'st thou have me
Give up so fair a prize to this barbarian ?
What ! whilst the tyrant spreads destruction round him,
Unpeoples kingdoms, and destroys mankind,
Shall beauty's charms be sacrific'd to bribe
A madman's frenzy ? I shou'd envy him
That lovely fair one more than all his glory ;
Not that I feel the stings of wild desire,
Or, in the evening of my days, indulge,
Old as I am, a shameless passion for her ;
But, whether objects born like her to please,
Spite of ourselves, demand our tend'rest pity,
Or that perhaps a childless father hopes
To find in her another daughter, why
I know not, but for that unhappy maid
Still am I anxious ; be it weakness in me,
Or reason's pow'rful voice, I cannot bear
To see her in the hands of Mahomet ;
Wou'd I cou'd mould her to my wishes, form
Her willing mind, and make her hate the tyrant
As I do ! she has sent to speak with me
Here in the sacred porch—and lo ! she comes :
On her fair cheek the blush of modesty
And candor speaks the virtues of her heart.

SCENE II.

ZOPIR, PALMIRA.

Zop. Hail, lovely maid ! the chance of cruel war
Hath made thee Zopir's captive, but thou art not
Amongst barbarians ; all with me revere

Palmira's

Palmira's virtues, and lament her fate,
 Whilst youth with innocence and beauty plead
 Thy cause; whate'er thou ask'st in Zopir's pow'r
 Thou shalt not ask in vain: my life declines
 Towards its period, and if my last hours
 Can give Palmira joy, I shall esteem them
 The best, the happiest I have ever known.

Pal. These two months past, my lord, your pris'ner
 Scarce have I felt the yoke of slavery; [here,
 Your gen'rous hand, still rais'd to sooth affliction,
 Hath wiped the tears of sorrow from my eyes,
 And soften'd all the rigour of my fate:
 Forgive me, if embolden'd by your goodness
 I ask for more, and centre ev'ry hope
 Of future happiness on you alone;
 Forgive me, if to Mahomet's request
 I join Palmira's, and implore that freedom
 He hath already ask'd: O listen to him,
 And let me say, that after heav'n and him
 I am indebted most to gen'rous Zopir.

Zop. Has then oppression such enticing charms
 That thou shou'd'st wish and beg to be the slave
 Of Mahomet, to hear the clash of arms,
 With him to live in deserts, and in caves,
 And wander o'er his ever shifting country?

Pal. Where'er the mind with ease and pleasure dwells,
 There is our home, and there our native country:
 He form'd my soul; to Mahomet I owe
 The kind instruction of my earlier years;
 Taught by the happy part'ners of his bed,
 Who still adoring and ador'd by him
 Send up their pray'rs to heav'n for his dear safety,
 I liv'd in peace and joy! for ne'er did woe
 Pollute that seat of bliss till the sad hour
 Of my misfortune, when wide-wasting war
 Rush'd in upon us and enslav'd Palmira:
 Pity, my lord, a heart oppress'd with grief,
 That sighs for objects far far distant from her.

Zop. I understand you, madam, you expect
 The tyrant's hand, and hope to share his throne.

Pal.

Pal. I honour him, my lord ; my trembling soul
Looks up to Mahomet with holy fear
As to a God ; but never did this heart
Ere cherish the vain hope that he wou'd deign
To wed Palmira : No : such splendor ill
Wou'd suit my humble state.

Zop. Whoe'er thou art,
He was not born, I trust, to be thy husband,
No, nor thy master ; much I err, or thou
Spring'st from a race design'd by heav'n to check
This haughty Arab, and give laws to him,
Who thus assumes the majesty of kings.

Pal. Alas ! we know not what it is to boast
Of birth or fortune ; from our infant years
Without or parents, friends, or country, doom'd
To slav'ry ; here resign'd to our hard fate,
Strangers to all but to that God we serve,
We live content in humble poverty.

Zop. And can ye be content ? and are ye strangers,
Without a father, and without a home ?
I am a childless, poor, forlorn, old man ;
You might have been the comfort of my age :
To form a plan of future happiness
For you, had soften'd my own wretchedness,
And made me some amends for all my wrongs :
But you abhor my country and my law.

Pal. I am not mistress of myself, and how
Can I be thine ? I pity thy misfortunes
And bless thee for thy goodness to Palmira ;
But Mahomet has been a father to me.

Zop. A father ! ye just Gods ! the vile impostor !

Pal. Can he deserve that name, the holy prophet,
The great ambassador of heav'n, sent down
T' interpret its high will ?

Zop. Deluded mortals !
How blind ye are, to follow this proud madman,
This happy robber, whom my justice spar'd,
And raise him from the scaffold to a throne !

Pal. My lord, I shudder at your imprecations ;
Though I am bound by honour and the ties
Of gratitude to love thee for thy bounties,

This

This blasphemy against my kind protector
 Cancels the bond, and fills my soul with horror.
 O superstition, how thy savage pow'r
 Deprives at once the best and tend'rest hearts
 Of their humanity!

Zop. Alas! Palmira,
 Spite of myself, I feel for thy misfortunes,
 Pity thy weakness, and lament thy fate.

Pal. You will not grant me then——

Zop. I cannot yield thee
 To him who has deceiv'd thy easy heart,
 To a base tyrant; No: thou art a treasure
 Too precious to be parted with, and mak'st
 This hypocrite but more detested.

S C E N E III.

ZOPIR, PALMIRA, PHANOR.

Zop. Phanor,
 What woud'st thou?

Pba. At the city gate that leads
 To Moad's fertile plain the valian Omar
 Is just arriv'd.

Zop. Indeed! the tyrant's friend,
 The fierce vindictive Omar, his new convert,
 Who had so long oppos'd him, and still fought
 For us!

Pba. Perhaps he yet may serve his country,
 Already he hath offer'd terms of peace;
 Our chiefs have parley'd with him, he demands
 An hostage, and I hear they've granted him
 The noble Seid.

Pal. Seid? gracious heav'n!

Pba. Behold! my lord, he comes.

Zop. Ha! Omar here!
 There's no retreating now, he must be heard;
 Palmira, you may leave us.—O ye gods
 Of my forefathers, you, who have protected

The

The sons of Ismael these three thousand years,
And thou, O Sun, with all those sacred lights
That glitter round us, witness to my truth,
Aid and support me in the glorious conflict
With proud iniquity !

S C E N E IV.

ZOPIR, OMAR, PHANOR, Attendants.

Zop. At length, it seems,
Omar returns, after a three years absence,
To visit that lov'd country which his hand
So long defended, and his honest heart
Has now betray'd : deserter of our gods,
Deserter of our laws, how dar'st thou thus
Approach these sacred walls to persecute
And to oppress ; a public robber's slave ;
What is thy errand ? wherefore com'st thou hither ?

Omar. To pardon thee : by me our holy prophet,
In pity to thy age, thy well-known valour,
And past misfortunes, offers thee his hand :
Omar is come to bring thee terms of peace.

Zop. And shall a factious rebel offer peace,
Who shou'd have sued for pardon ? gracious gods !
Will ye permit him to usurp your pow'r,
And suffer Mahomet to rule mankind ?
Dost thou not blush, vile minion, as thou art,
To serve a traitor ? hast thou not beheld him
Friendless and poor, an humble citizen,
And ranking with the meanest of the throng ?
How little then in fortune or in fame !

Omar. Thus low and grow'ling souls like thine pretend
To judge of merit, whilst in fortune's scale
Ye weigh the worth of men : proud empty being,
Dost thou not know that the poor worm which crawls
Low on the earth, and the imperial eagle
That soars to heav'n, in the all-seeing eye
Of their eternal maker are the same,
And shrink to nothing ? men are equal all ;

From

From virtue only true distinction springs,
 And not from birth : there are exalted spirits
 Who claim respect and honour from themselves
 And not their ancestors : these, these, my lord,
 Are heav'n's peculiar care, and such is he
 Whom I obey, and who alone deserves
 To be a master ; all mankind like me
 Shall one day fall before the conqu'ror's feet,
 And future ages follow my example.

Zop. Omar, I know thee well ; thy artful hand
 In vain hath drawn the visionary portrait ;
 Thou may'st deceive the multitude, but know,
 What Mecca worships Zopir can despise :
 Be honest then, and with th' impartial eye
 Of reason look on Mahomet ; behold him
 But as a mortal, and consider well
 By what base arts the vile impostor rose,
 A camel-driver, a poor abject slave,
 Who first deceived a fond believing woman,
 And now supported by an idle dream
 Draws in the weak and cred'ulous multitude :
 Condemn'd to exile, I chastis'd the rebel
 Too lightly, and his insolence returns
 With double force to punish my indulgence.
 He fled with Fatima from cave to cave,
 And suffer'd chains, contempt and banishment ;
 Mean time the fury, which he call'd divine,
 Spread like a subtle poison thro' the croud ;
 Medina was infected : Omar then,
 To reason's voice attentive, wou'd have stopp'd
 Th' impetuous torrent ; he had courage then
 And virtue to attack the proud usurper,
 Tho' now he crouches to him like a slave.
 If thy proud master be indeed a prophet,
 How did'st thou dare to punish him ? or why,
 If an impostor, wilt thou dare to serve him ?

Omar. I punish'd him ; because I knew him not ;
 But now, the veil of ignorance remov'd,
 I see him as he is ; behold him born
 To change th' astonish'd world, and rule mankind :
 When I beheld him rise in awful pomp

Intrepid,

Itrepid, eloquent, by all admir'd,
 By all ador'd; beheld him speak and act,
 Punish and pardon like a God, I lent
 My little aid, and join'd the conqueror.
 Altars, thou know'st, and thrones were our reward;
 Once I was blind, like thee, but, thanks to heav'n!
 My eyes are open'd now; wou'd, Zopir, thine
 Were open too! let me intreat thee, change,
 As I have done; no longer boast thy zeal
 And cruel hatred, nor blaspheme our God,
 But fall submissive at the hero's feet
 Whom thou hast injur'd; kiss the hand that bears
 The angry light'ning; lest it fall upon thee.
 Omar is now the second of mankind;
 A place of honour yet remains for thee,
 If prudent thou wilt yield, and own a master:
 What we have been thou know'st, and what we are:
 The multitude are ever weak and blind,
 Made for our use, born but to serve the great,
 But to admire, believe us, and obey:
 Reign then with us, partake the feast of grandeur,
 No longer deign to imitate the croud,
 But henceforth make 'em tremble.

Zop. Tremble thou,
 And Mahomet, with all thy hateful train:
 Think'st thou that Mecca's faithful chief will fall
 At an impostor's feet, and crown a rebel?
 I am no stranger to his specious worth;
 His courage and his conduct have my praise;
 Were he but virtuous, I like thee shou'd love him;
 But as he is I hate the tyrant: hence,
 Nor talk to me of his deceitful mercy,
 His clemency and goodness; all his aim
 Is cruelty and vengeance: with this hand
 I slew his darling son; I banish'd him:
 My hatred is inflexible, and so
 Is Mahomet's resentment: if he ere
 Re-enters Mecca, he must cut his way
 Thro' Zopir's blood, for he is deeply stain'd
 With crimes that justice never can forgive.

Omar.

Omar. To shew thee Mahomet is merciful,
That he can pardon tho' thou can'st not, here
I offer thee the third of all our spoils,
Which we have ta'en from tributary kings;
Name your conditions, and the terms of peace;
Set your own terms on fair Palmira; take
Our treasures, and be happy.

Zop. Think'st thou Zopir
Will basely sell his honour and his country,
Will blast his name with infamy for wealth,
The foul reward of guilt, or that Palmira
Will ever own a tyrant for her master?
She is too virtuous e'er to be the slave
Of Mahomet, nor will I suffer her
To fall a sacrifice to base impostors,
Who wou'd subvert the laws, and undermine
The safety and the virtue of mankind.

Omar. Implacably severe; thou talk'st to Omar
As if he were a criminal, and thou
His judge; but henceforth I wou'd have thee act
A better part, and treat me as a friend,
As the ambassador of Mahomet,
A conqu'ror and a king.

Zop. A king! who made,
Who crown'd him?

Omar. Victory: respect his glory,
And tremble at his pow'r: amidst his conquests
The hero offers peace; our swords are still
Unsheath'd, and woe to this rebellious city
If she submits not: think what blood must flow,
The blood of half our fellow-citizens;
Consider, Zopir, Mahomet is here,
And even now requests to speak with thee.

Zop. Ha! Mahomet!

Omar. Yes, he conjures thee.

Zop. Traitor!

Were I the sole despotic ruler here,
He shou'd be answer'd soon——by chastisement.

Omar. I pity, Zopir, thy pretended virtue;
But since the senate insolently claim

Divided

Divided empire with thee, to the senate
Let us begone ; Omar will meet thee there.

Zop. I'll follow thee ; we then shall see who best
Can plead his cause : I will defend my gods,
My country, and her laws ; thy impious voice
Shall bellow for thy vengeful deity,
Thy persecuting god, and his false prophet.

[*Turning to Phanor.*

Haste, Phanor, and with me repulse the traitor ;
Who spares a villain is a villain :—come,
Let us, my friend, unite to crush his pride,
Subvert his wily purpose, destroy him,
Or perish in th' attempt : If Mecca listens
To Zopir's councils, I shall free my country
From a proud tyrant's pow'r, and save mankind.



ACT II. SCENE I.

SEID, PALMIRA.

Pal. **W**elcome, my Seid, do I see thee here
Once more in safety ? what propitious God
Conducted thee ? at length Palmira's woes
Shall have an end, and we may yet be happy.

Seid. Thou sweetest charmer, balm of ev'ry woe,
Dear object of my wishes and my tears,
O, since that day of blood, when flush'd with conquest
The fierce barbarian snatch'd thee from my arms,
When mid'st a heap of slaughter'd friends I lay
Expiring on the ground, and call'd on death,
But call'd in vain, to end my hated being,
What have I suffer'd for my dear Palmira !
How have I curs'd the tardy hours that long
Withheld my vengeance ! my distracted soul
Impatient thirsted for the bloody field,
That with these hands I might lay waste this seat

Of

Of slav'ry, where Palmira mourn'd so long
 In sad captivity ; but thanks to heav'n !
 Our holy prophet, whose deep purposes
 Are far beyond the ken of human wisdom,
 Hath hither sent his chosen servant Omar ;
 I flew to meet him, they requir'd an hostage ;
 I gave my faith, and they receiv'd it ; firm
 In my resolve to live or die for thee.

Pal. Seid, the very moment ere thou cam'st
 To calm my fears, and save me from despair,
 Was I intreating the proud ravisher ;
 Thou know'st, I cry'd, the only good on earth
 I priz'd is left behind, restore it to me :
 Then clasp'd his knees, fell at the tyrant's feet,
 And bath'd 'em with my tears, but all in vain :
 How his unkind refusal shock'd my soul !
 My eyes grew dim, and motionless I stood
 As one depriv'd of life ; no succour nigh,
 No ray of hope was left, when Seid came
 To ease my troubled heart, and bring me comfort.

Seid. Who cou'd behold unmov'd Palmira's woes ?

Pal. The cruel Zopir ; not insensible
 He seem'd to my misfortunes, yet at last
 Unkindly told me, I must never hope
 To leave these walls, for nought shou'd tear me from
 him.

Seid. 'Tis false ; for Mahomet, my royal master,
 With the victorious Omar, and forgive me,
 If to these noble friends I proudly add
 The name of Seid, these shall set thee free,
 Dry up thy tears, and make Palmira happy :
 The God of Mahomet, our great protector,
 That God whose sacred standard I have borne ;
 He who destroy'd Medina's haughty ramparts
 Shall lay rebellious Mecca at our feet ;
 Omar is here, and the glad people look
 With eyes of friendship on him ; in the name
 Of Mahomet he comes, and meditates
 Some noble purpose.

Pal. Mahomet indeed
 Might free us, and unite two hearts long since

Devoted

Devoted to his cause ; but he, alas !
Is far remov'd, and we abandon'd captives.

S C E N E II.

PALMIRA, SEID, OMAR.

Omar. Despair not ; heav'n perhaps may yet reward
For Mahomet and liberty are nigh. [you,

Seid. Is he then come ?

Pal. Our friend and father ?

Omar. Yes.

I met the council, and, by Mahomet
Inspir'd, address'd them thus : " Within these walls,
" Ev'n here, I cry'd, the favorite of heav'n,
" Our holy prophet, first drew breath, the great,
" The mighty conqu'ror, the support of kings,
" And will ye not permit him but to rank
" As friend and fellow citizen ? he comes not
" To ruin or enslave, but to protect,
" To teach you and to save, to fix his pow'r,
" And hold dominion o'er the conquer'd heart."

I spake ; the hoary sages smil'd applause,
And all inclin'd to favor us ; but Zopir,
Still resolute and still inflexible,
Declar'd, the people shou'd be call'd together,
And give their gen'ral voice : the people met,
Again I spake, address'd the citizens,
Exhorted, threaten'd, practis'd ev'ry art
To win their favor, and at length prevail'd ;
The gates are open'd to great Mahomet,
Who after fifteen years of cruel exile
Returns to bless once more his native land ;
With him the gallant Hali, brave Hercides,
And Ammon the invincible, besides
A numerous train of chosen followers :
The people throng around him ; some with looks
Of hatred, some with smiles of cordial love ;
Some bless the hero, and some curse the tyrant :

Some threaten and blaspheme, whilst others fall
 Beneath his feet, embrace and worship him :
 Mean-time the names of God, of peace, and freedom,
 Are echo'd thro' the all-believing croud ;
 Whilst Zopir's dying party bellows forth
 In idle threats its impotent revenge :
 Amidst their cries, unruffled and serene,
 In triumph walks the god-like Mahomet,
 Bearing the olive in his hand ; already
 Peace is proclaim'd, and see ! the conqu'ror comes.

S C E N E III.

MAHOMET, OMAR, HERCIDES, SEID,
 PALMIRA, Attendants.

Mab. My friends, and fellow-lab'ers, valiant Hali,
 Morad, and Hammon, and Hercides, hence
 To your great work, and in my name instruct
 The people, lead them to the paths of truth,
 Promise and threaten ; let my God alone
 Be worshipp'd, and let those who will not love
 Be taught to fear him.—*Seid*, art thou here ?

Seid. My ever-honour'd father, and my king,
 Led by that pow'r divine who guided thee
 To Mecca's walls, preventing your commands
 I came, prepar'd to live or die with thee.

Mab. You shou'd have waited for my orders ; he
 Who goes beyond his duty knows it not ;
 I am heav'n's minister, and thou art mine ;
 Learn then of me to serve and to obey.

Pal. Forgive, my lord, a youth's impatient ardor :
 Brought up together from our infant years,
 The same our fortunes, and our thoughts the same :
 Alas ! my life has been a life of sorrow ;
 Long have I languish'd in captivity,
 Far from my friends, from *Seid*, and from thee ;
 And now at last, when I beheld a ray
 Of comfort shining on me, thy unkindness
 Blasts my fair hopes, and darkens all the scene.

Mab.

Mab. Palmira, 'tis enough : I know thy virtues ;
 Let nought disturb thee : spite of all my cares
 Glory, and empire, and the weight of war,
 I will remember thee ; Palmira still
 Lives in my heart, and shares it with mankind :
 Seid shall join our troops ; thou, gentle maid,
 May'st serve thy God in peace : fear nought but Zopir.

S C E N E IV.

MAHOMET, OMAR.

Mab. Brave Omar, stay, for in thy faithful bosom
 Will I repose the secrets of my soul :
 The ling'ring progress of a doubtful siege
 May stop our rapid course ; we must not give
 These weak deluded mortals too much time
 To pry into our actions ; prejudice
 Rules o'er the vulgar with despotic sway.
 Thou know'st there is a tale, which I have spread
 And they believe, that universal empire
 Awaits the prophet, who to Mecca's walls
 Shall lead his conqu'ring bands, and bring her peace.
 'Tis mine to mark the errors of mankind,
 And to avail me of them ; but whilst thus
 I try each art to sooth this fickle people,
 What thinks my friend of Seid and Palmira ?

Omar. I think most nobly of them, that amidst
 Those few staunch followers who own no God,
 No faith but thine, who love thee as their father,
 Their friend, and benefactor, none obey
 Or serve thee with an humbler, better mind ;
 They are most faithful.

Mab. Omar, thou'rt deceiv'd ;
 They are my worst of foes, they love each other.

Omar. And can you blame their tenderness ?

Mab. My friend,
 I'll tell thee all my weakness.

Omar. How, my lord !

M 2

Mab.

Mab. Thou know'st the reigning passion of my soul ;
 Whilst proud ambition and the cares of empire
 Weigh'd heavy on me, Mahomet's hard life
 Has been a conflict with opposing nature,
 Whom I have vanquish'd by austerity,
 And self-denial ; I have banish'd from me
 That baleful poison which unnerves mankind,
 Which only serves to fire them into madness,
 And brutal follies ; on the burning sand
 Or desert rocks I brave th' inclement sky,
 And bear the seasons rough vicissitude :
 Love is my only solace, the dear object
 Of all my toils, the idol I adore,
 The God of Mahomet, the pow'rful rival
 Of my ambition : know, mid'st all my queens,
 Palmira reigns sole mistress of my heart :
 Think then what pangs of jealousy thy friend
 Must feel, when she express'd her fatal passion
 For Seid.

Omar. But thou art reveng'd.

Mab. Judge thou
 If soon I ought not to take vengeance on them ;
 That thou may'st hate my rival more, I'll tell thee
 Who Seid and Palmira are—the children
 Of him, whom I abhor, my deadliest foe.

Omar. Ha ! Zopir !

Mab. Is their father : fifteen years
 Are past since brave Hercides to my care
 Gave up their infant years ; they know not yet
 Or who or what they are ; I brought them up
 Together ; I indulg'd their lawless passion,
 And added fuel to the guilty flame.
 Methinks it is as if the hand of heav'n
 Had meant in them to centre ev'ry crime.
 But I must—Ha ! their father comes this way,
 His eyes are full of bitterness and wrath
 Against me :—now be vigilant, my Omar,
 Hercides must be careful to possess
 This most important pass ; return, and tell me
 Whether 'tis most expedient to declare
 Against him, or retreat : away.

SCENE

SCENE V.

ZOPIR, MAHOMET.

Zop. Hard fate !

Unhappy Zopir ! thus compell'd to meet
My worst of foes, the foe of all mankind !

Mab. Since 'tis the will of heav'n that Mahomet
And Zopir shou'd at length unite, approach
Without a blush, and fearless tell thy tale.

Zop. I blush for thee alone, whose baneful arts
Have drawn thy country to the brink of ruin ;
Who in the bosom of fair peace wou'd'st wage
Intestine war, loosen the sacred bonds
Of friendship, and destroy our happiness ;
Beneath the veil of proffer'd terms thou mean'st
But to betray, whilst discord stalks before thee :
Thou vile assemblage of hypocrisy
And insolence, abhorred tyrant ! thus
Do the chos'n ministers of heav'n dispense
Its sacred blessings, and announce their God ?

Mab. Wert thou not Zopir, I wou'd answer thee
As thou deserv'st, in thunder, by the voice
Of that offended being thou derid'st :
Arm'd with the hallow'd koran I wou'd teach thee
'To tremble and obey in humble silence :
And with the subject world to kneel before me ;
But I will talk to thee without disguise,
As man to man shou'd speak, and friend to friend :
I have ambition, Zopir ; where's the man
Who has it not ? but never citizen,
Or chief, or priest, or king projected aught
So noble as the plan of Mahomet ;
In acts or arms hath ev'ry nation shone
Superior in its turn ; Arabia now
Steps forth ; that gen'rous people, long unknown
And unrespected, saw her glories sunk,
Her honours lost ; but, lo ! the hour is come
When she shall rise to vict'ry and renown ;

The world lies desolate from pole to pole ;
 India's a slave, and bleeding Persia mourns
 Her slaughter'd sons ; whilst Egypt hangs the head
 Dejected, from the walls of Constantine
 Splendor is fled ; the Roman empire torn
 By discord, sees its scatter'd members spread
 On ev'ry side inglorious ; let us raise
 Arabia on the ruins of mankind :
 The blind and tott'ring universe demands
 Another worship, and another God.
 Crete had her Minos, Ægypt her Osiris,
 To Asia Zoroaster gave his laws,
 And Numa was in Italy ador'd :
 O'er savage nations where nor monarchs ruled,
 Nor manners soften'd, nor religion taught,
 Hath many a sage his fruitless maxims spread ;
 Beneath a nobler yoke I mean to bend
 The prostrate world, and change their feeble laws,
 Abolish their false worship, to pull down
 Their pow'rless gods, and on my purer faith
 Found universal empire : say not, Zopir,
 That Mahomet betrays his country, no :
 I mean but to destroy its weak supports,
 And, banishing idolatry, unite it
 Beneath one king, one prophet, and one God ;
 I shall subdue it but to make it glorious.

Zop. Is this thy purpose then, and dar'st thou thus
 Avow it ? can'st thou change the hearts of men,
 And make them think like thee ? Are war and slaughter
 The harbingers of wisdom and of peace ?
 Can he who ravages instruct mankind ?
 If in the night of ignorance and error
 We long have wander'd, must thy dreadful torch
 Enlighten us ? What right hast thou to empire ?

Mab. That right which firm exalted spirits claim
 O'er vulgar minds.

Zop. Thus ev'ry bold impostor
 May forge new fetters, and enslave mankind :
 He has a right, it seems, to cheat the world
 If he can do it with an air of grandeur.

Mab.

Mab. I know your people well ; I know they want .
A leader ; my religion, true or false,
Is needful to them : what have all your gods
And all your idols done ? what laurels grow
Beneath their altars ? your low grov'ling sect
Debases man, unnerves his active soul,
And makes it heavy, phlegmatic, and mean ;
Whilst mine exalts it, gives it strength and courage :
My law forms heroes.

Zop. Rather call them robbers :
Away ; nor bring thy hateful lessons here ;
Go to the school of tyrants, boast thy frauds
To lost Medina, where thou reign'st supreme,
Where blinded bigots bend beneath thy pow'r,
And thou behold'st thy equals at thy feet.

Mab. My equals ! Mahomet has none ; long since
I pass'd 'em all ; Medina is my own,
And Mecca trembles at me ; if thou hold'st
Thy safety dear, receive the peace I offer.

Zop. Thou talk'st of peace, but 'tis not in thy heart ;
I'm not to be deceiv'd.

Mab. I wou'd not have thee ;
The weak deceive, the powerful command :
To-morrow I shall force thee to submit ;
To-day, observe, I wou'd have been thy friend.

Zop. Can we be friends ? can Mahomet and Zopir
E'er be united ? say, what God shall work
A miracle like that ?

Mab. I'll tell thee one,
A pow'rful God, one that is always heard,
By me he speaks to thee.

Zop. Who is it ? name him.

Mab. Int'rest, thy own dear int'rest.

Zop. Sooner heav'n
And hell shall be united ; interest
May be the god of Mahomet, but mine
Is—justice : what shall join them to each other ?
Where is the cement that must bind our friendship ?
Is it that son I slew, or the warm blood
Of Zopir's house which thou has shed ?

Mab. It is
Thy blood, thy son's—for now I will unveil
A secret to thee, known to none but me :
Thou weepest thy children dead ; they both are—living.

Zop. What say'st thou ? living ? unexpected bliss !
My children living ?

Mab. Yes ; and both—my pris'ners.

Zop. My children slaves to thee ? impossible !

Mab. My bounty nourish'd them.

Zop. And cou'd'st thou spare
A child of Zopir's ?

Mab. For their father's faults
I wou'd not punish them.

Zop. But tell me, say,
For what are they reserv'd ?

Mab. Their life or death
Depend on me : speak but the word, and thou
Art master of their fate.

Zop. O name the price
And thou shalt have it ; must I give my blood,
Or must I bear their chains, and be the slave
Of Mahomet ?

Mab. I ask not either of thee :
Lend me thy aid but to subdue the world ;
Surrender Mecca to me, and give up
Your temple, bid th' astonish'd people read
My sacred Alkoran, be thou my vassal,
And fall before me, then will I restore
Thy son, perhaps hereafter may reward thee
With honours, and contract a closer tie
With Zopir.

Zop. Mahomet, thou see'st in me
A tender father : after fifteen years
Of cruel absence, to behold my children,
To die in their embraces, were the first
And fairest blessings that my soul cou'd wish for ;
But if to thee I must betray my country,
Or sacrifice my children, know, proud tyrant,
The choice is made already—fare thee well.

Mab.

Mab. Inexorable dotard! but henceforth
I will be more implacable, more cruel
Ev'n than thyself.

S C E N E VI.

MAHOMET, OMAR.

Omar. And so indeed thou must be,
Or all is lost: already I have bought
Their secret counsels: Mahomet, to-morrow
The truce expires, and Zopir reassumes
His pow'r; thy life's in danger: half the senate
Are leagu'd against thee: those who dare not fight
May hire the dark assassins to destroy thee;
May screen their guilt beneath the mask of justice,
And call the murder legal punishment.

Mab. First they shall feel my vengeance: persecution,
Thou know'st, has ever been my best support.
Zopir must die.

Omar. 'Tis well resolv'd: his fate
Will teach the rest obedience: lose no time.

Mab. Yet, spite of my resentment, I must hide
The murder's hand that deals the blow, to scape
Suspicion's watchful eye, and not incense
The multitude.

Omar. They are not worth our care.

Mab. And yet they must be pleas'd: I want an arm
That will strike boldly.

Omar. Seid is the man;
I'll answer for him.

Mab. Seid?

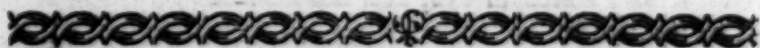
Omar. Ay: the best,
The fittest instrument to serve our purpose:
As Zopir's hostage he may find occasion
To speak with him, and soon avenge his master.
Thy other favourites are too wise, too prudent
For such a dangerous enterprise; old age
Takes off the bandage of credulity
From mortal eyes; but the young simple heart,

The willing slave to its own fond opinions,
 And void of guile, will act as we direct it:
 Youth is the proper period for delusion.
 Seid, thou know'st, is superstitious, bold,
 And violent, but easy to be led;
 Like a tame lion, to his keeper's voice
 Obedient.

Mab. What! the brother of Palmira?

Omar. Ay; Seid, the fierce son of thy proud foe,
 Th' incestuous rival of great Mahomet,
 His master's rival.

Mab. I detest him, Omar,
 Abhor his very name; my murder'd son
 Cries out for vengeance on him; but thou know'st
 The object of my love, and whence she sprung;
 Thou seest I am oppress'd on ev'ry side;
 I wou'd have altars, victims, and a throne;
 I wou'd have Zopir's blood, and Seid's too:
 I must consult my int'rest, my revenge,
 My honour, and my love, that fatal passion,
 Which, spite of my resentment, holds this heart
 In shameful chains: I must consult religion,
 All pow'rful motive, and necessity
 That throws a veil o'er ev'ry crime—away.



ACT III. SCENE I.

SEID, PALMIRA.

Pal. O Seid, keep me not in dread suspense,
 What is this secret sacrifice? what blood
 Hath heav'n demanded?

Seid. The eternal pow'r
 Deigns to accept my service, calls on me
 To execute its purposes divine;
 To him this heart's devoted, and for him

This

This arm shall rise in vengeance ; I am bound
To Omar and to Mahomet, have sworn
To perish in the glorious cause of heav'n:
My next and dearest care shall be Palmira.

Pal. Why was not I a witness to thy oath ?
Had I been with thee, I had been less wretched ;
But doubts distract me : Omar talks of treason,
Of blood that soon must flow ; the senate's rage,
And Zopir's dark intrigues : the flames of war
Once more are kindled, and the sword is drawn
Heav'n only knows when to be sheath'd again :
So says our prophet, he, who cannot lye,
Cannot deceive us : O I fear for Seid,
Fear all from Zopir.

Seid. Can he have a heart
So base and so perfidious ? but this morning,
When as an hostage I appear'd before him,
I thought him noble, gen'rous, and humane ;
Some pow'r invincible in secret work'd,
And won me to him ; whether the respect
Due to his name, or specious form external,
Conceal'd the blackness of his heart, I know not ;
Whether thy presence fill'd my raptur'd soul
With joy that drove out ev'ry painful sense,
And wou'd not let me think on aught but thee :
Whate'er the cause, methought I was most happy
When nearest him : that he shou'd thus seduce
My easy heart makes me detest him more ;
And yet how hard it is to look on those
With eyes of hatred, whom we wish to love !

Pal. By ev'ry bond hath heav'n united us,
And Seid and Palmira are the same :
Were I not bound to thee, and to that faith
Which Mahomet inspires, I too had pleaded
The cause of Zopir ; but religion, love,
And nature, all forbid it.

Seid. Think no more
Of vain remorse, but listen to the voice
Of heav'n, the God we serve will be propitious :
Our holy prophet who protects his children

Will bless our faithful love : for thy dear sake
I hazard all. Farewel.

S C E N E II.

P A L M I R A alone.

Pal. Some dark presage
Of future misery hangs o'er me still :
That love which made my happiness, this day,
So often wish'd for, is a day of horror :
What is this dreadful oath, this solemn compact
Which Seid talks of ? I've a thousand fears
Upon me when I think of Zopir : oft,
As I invoke great Mahomet, I feel
A secret dread, and tremble as I worship :
O save me, heaven ! fearful I obey,
And blind I follow : O direct my steps
Aright, and deign to wash my tears away !

S C E N E III.

M A H O M E T, P A L M I R A.

Pal. Propitious heav'n hath heard my pray'rs ; he
comes,
The prophet comes. O gracious Mahomet,
My Seid——

Mab. What of him ? thou seem'st disturb'd ;
What shou'd Palmira fear when I am with her !

Pal. Have I not cause when Mahomet himself
Seems touch'd with grief ?

Mab. Perhaps it is for thee :
Dar'st thou, imprudent maid, avow a passion
Ere I approv'd it : is the heart I form'd
Turn'd rebel to its master, to my laws
Unfaithful ? O ingratitude !

Pal. My lord,
Behold me at your feet, and pity me :

Did'st

Did'st thou not once propitious smile upon us,
And give thy sanction to our growing love?
Thou know'st the virtuous passion that unites us
Is but a chain that binds us more to thee.

Mab. The bonds that folly and imprudence knit
Are dang'rous; guilt doth sometimes follow close
The steps of innocence: our hearts deceive us,
And love, with all his store of dear delights,
May cost us tears, and dip his shafts in blood.

Pal. Nor wou'd I murmur if it flow'd for Seid.

Mab. Are you indeed so fond?

Pal. E'er since the day
When good Hercides to thy sacred pow'r
Consign'd us both, unconquerable instinct,
Still growing with our years, united us
In tender friendship; 'twas the work of heav'n
That guides our ev'ry action, and o'errules
The fate of mortals; so thy doctrines teach:
God cannot change, nor gracious heav'n condemn
That love itself inspir'd: what once was right
Is always so; can'st thou then blame Palmira?

Mab. I can, and must; nay, thou wilt tremble more
When I reveal the horrid secret to thee.
Attend, rash maid, and let me teach thy soul
What to avoid, and what to follow: listen
To me alone.

Pal. To thee alone Palmira
Will listen ever, the obedient slave
Of Mahomet; this heart can never lose
Its veneration for thy sacred name.

Mab. That veneration in excess may lead
To foul ingratitude.

Pal. When I forget
Thy goodness, then may Seid punish me!

Mab. Seid!

Pal. O why, my lord, that cruel frown,
And look severe?

Mab. Be not alarm'd; I meant
But to explore the secrets of thy heart,
And try if thou wert worthy to be sav'd:
Be confident, and rest on my protection;

On your obedience will depend your fate ;
 If ye expect a blessing at my hands,
 Be careful to deserve it, and whate'er
 The will of heav'n determines touching Seid,
 Be thou his guide, direct him in the paths
 Of duty, and religion ; let him keep
 His promise, and be worthy of Palmira.

Pal. O he will keep it ; doubt him not, my lord,
 I'll answer for his heart as for my own ;
 Seid adores thee, worships Mahomet
 More than he loves Palmira ; thou art all
 To him, his friend, his father, and his king :
 I'll fly, and urge him to his duty.

S C E N E IV.

MAHOMET alone.

Well:

Spite of myself I must, it seems, be made
 A confident ; the simple girl betray'd
 Her guilty flame, and innocently plung'd
 The dagger in my heart : unhappy race !
 Father, and children, all my foes, all doom'd
 To make me wretched ! but ye soon shall prove
 That dreadful is my hatred,—and my love.

S C E N E V.

MAHOMET, OMAR.

Omar. At length the hour is come, to seize Palmira,
 To conquer Mecca, and to punish Zopir ;
 His death alone can prop our feeble cause,
 And humble these proud citizens : brave Seid
 Can best revenge thee ; he has free access
 To Zopir : yonder gloomy passage leads
 To his abode ; there the rebellious chief
 His idle vows and flatt'ring incense pours

Before

Before his fancy'd deities ; there Seid,
Full of the law divine by thee inspir'd,
Shall sacrifice the traitor to the God
Of Mahomet.

Mab. He shall: that youth was born
For crimes of deepest die : he shall be first
My useful slave, my instrument, and then
The victim of my rage ; it must be so :
My safety, my resentment, and my love,
My holy faith, and the decrees of fate
Irrevocable, all require it of me :
But think'st thou, Omar, he hath all the warmth
Of wild fanaticism ?

Omar. I know he has,
And suits our purpose well ; Palmira too
Will urge him on ; religion, love, resentment
Will blind his headstrong youth, and hurry him
To madness.

Mab. Hast thou bound him by an oath ?

Omar. O yes ; in all the gloomy pomp of rites
Nocturnal, oaths, and altars, we have fix'd
His superstitious soul, plac'd in his hand
The sacred sword, and fir'd him with the rage
Of fierce enthusiasm—but behold him.

S C E N E VI.

MAHOMET, OMAR, SEID.

Mab. Child

Of heav'n, decreed to execute the laws
Of an offended God, now hear by me
His sacred will : thou must avenge his cause.

Seid. O thou, to whom my soul devoted bends
In humblest adoration, king, and prophet,
Sov'reign acknowledg'd by the voice of heav'n
O'er prostrate nations—I am wholly thine :
But O enlighten my dark mind, O say,
How can weak man avenge his God ?

Mab.

Mab. Oft-times

Doth he make use of feeble hands like thine
To punish impious mortals, and assert
His pow'r divine.

Seid. Will he, whose perfect image
Is seen in Mahomet, thus condescend
To honour Seid?

Mab. Do as he ordains;
That is the highest honour man can boast
Blindly to execute his great decree:
Be thankful for the choice, and strike the blow:
The angel of destruction shall assist,
The God of armies shall protect thee.

Seid. Speak;
What tyrant must be slain? what blood must flow?

Mab. The murth'rer's blood whom Mahomet abhors,
Who persecutes our faith, and spurns our God,
Who slew my son, the worst of all my foes,
The cruel Zopir.

Seid. Ha! must Zopir fall?

Mab. And dost thou pause? presumptuous youth!
'tis impious

But to delib'rate: far from Mahomet
Be all, who for themselves shall dare to judge
Audacious; those who reason are not oft
Prone to believe; thy part is to obey
Have I not told thee what the will of heav'n
Determines? If it be decreed that Mecca,
Spite of her crimes and base idolatry,
Shall be the promis'd temple, the chos'n seat
Of empire, where I am appointed king,
And Pontiff, know'st thou why our Mecca boasts
These honours? know'st thou holy Abram * here
Was born, that here his sacred ashes rest?
He who, obedient to the voice of God,
Stifled the cries of nature, and gave up
His darling child: the same all pow'rful being
Requires of thee a sacrifice, to thee

He

* The Mussulmans are persuaded that the tomb of Abraham is
at Mecca.

He calls for blood ; and dar'st thou hesitate
When God commands ? hence, vile idolater,
Unworthy Mussulman, away, and seek
Another master ; go, and love Palmira ;
But thou despisest her, and brav'st the wrath
Of angry heav'n ; away, forsake thy lord,
And serve his deadliest foes.

Seid. It is the voice
Of God that speaks in Mahomet :—command,
And I obey.

Mab. Strike then, and by the blood
Of Zopir merit life eternal.—Omar,
Attend and watch him well.

S C E N E VII.

S E I D alone.

Seid. To sacrifice
A poor defenceless weak old man !—no matter :
How many victims at the altar fall
As helpless ! yet their blood in grateful streams
Rises to heav'n : God hath appointed me ;
Seid hath sworn, and Seid shall perform
His sacred promise :—O assist me now,
Illustrious spirits, you, who have destroy'd
The tyrants of the earth, O join your rage
To mine, O guide this trembling hand, and thou
Exterminating angel, who defend'st
The cause of Mahomet, inspire this heart
With all thy fierceness !—ha ! what do I see ?

S C E N E VIII.

Z O P I R, S E I D.

Zop. Seid, thou seem'st disturb'd ; unhappy youth !
Why art thou rank'd amongst my foes ? my heart
Feels for thy woes, and trembles at thy danger ;
Horror

Horrors on horrors croud on every side ;
 My house may be a shelter from the storm,
 Accept it, thou art welcome, for thy life
 Is dear to Zopir.

Seid. Gracious heav'n ! wilt thou
 Protect me thus ? will Zopir guard his foe ?
 What do I hear ! O duty, conscience, virtue !
 O Mahomet, this rives my heart.

Zop. Perhaps
 Thou art surpris'd to find, that I can pity
 An enemy, and wish for Seid's welfare ;
 I am a man like thee, that tie alone
 Demands at least a sympathetic tear
 For innocence afflicted : gracious gods,
 Drive from this earth those base and savage men,
 Who shed with joy their fellow-creatures blood.

Seid. O glorious sentiments ! and can there be
 Such virtue in an infidel ?

Zop. Thou know'st
 But little of that virtue thus to stand
 Astonish'd at it ! O mistaken youth,
 In what a maze of errors art thou lost !
 Bound by a tyrant's savage laws, thou think'st
 Virtue resides in Mussulmans alone ;
 Thy master rules thee with a rod of iron,
 And shackles thy free soul in shameful bonds ;
 Zopir thou hat'st, alas ! thou know'st him not :
 I pardon thee because thou art the slave
 Of Mahomet ; but how can'st thou believe
 A God who teaches hatred, and delights
 In discord ?

Seid. O I never can obey him ;
 I know, and feel I cannot hate thee, Zopir.

Zop. Alas ! the more I talk to him, the more
 He gains upon me ; his ingenuous look,
 His youth, his candor, all conspire to charm me :
 How cou'd a follower of this vile impostor
 Thus win my heart ! who gave thee birth ? what art
 thou ?

Seid. -A wretched Orphan ; all I have on earth
 Is a kind master, whom I never yet

Have

Have disobey'd ; howe'er my love for thee
May tempt me to betray him.

Zop. Know'st thou not
Thy parents then ?

Seid. His camp was the first object
My eyes behold ; his temple is my country ;
I know no other ; and amid'st the croud
Of yearly tributes to our holy prophet,
None e'er was treated with more tenderness
Than Seid was.

Zop. I love his gratitude :
Thy kind return for benefits receiv'd
Merits my praise :—O why did heav'n employ
The hand of Mahomet in such an office ?
He was thy father, and Palmira's too ;
Why dost thou sigh ? why dost thou tremble thus ?
Why turn thee from me ? sure some dreadful thought
Hangs on thy mind.

Seid. It must be so : the times
Are full of terror.

Zop. If thou feel'st remorse
Thy heart is guiltless ; murder is abroad,
Let me preserve thy life.

Seid. O gracious heav'n !
And can I have a thought of taking thine ?
Palmira ! O my oath ! O God of vengeance !

Zop. For the last time remember I intreat thee
To follow me ; away, thy fate depends
Upon this moment.

SCENE IX.

ZOPIR, SEID, OMAR.

Omar. Traitor, Mahomet
Expects thee.

(Entering hastily.)

Seid. O I know not where or what
I am ; destruction, ruin, and despair
On ev'ry side await me : whither now
Shall wretched Seid fly ?

Omar.

Omar. To him whom God
Hath chos'n, thy injur'd king, and master.

Seid. Yes :
And there abjure the dreadful oath I made.

SCENE X.

Z O P I R alone.

Zop. The desp'rate youth is gone—I know not why,
But my heart beats for his distress ; his looks,
His pity, his remorse, his ev'ry action
Affect me deeply : I must follow him.

SCENE XI.

Z O P I R, P H A N O R.

Pba. This letter, fir, was by an Arab giv'n
In secret to me.

Zop. From Hercides ! gods,
What do I read ? will heav'n in tend'rest pity
At length repay me for a life of sorrows ?
Hercides begs to see me—he who snatch'd
From this fond bosom my two helpless children ;
They yet are living, so this paper tells me,
Slaves to the tyrant—Seid and Palmira
Are orphans both, and know not whence they sprang,
Perhaps my children—O delusive hope,
Why wilt thou flatter me ? it cannot be ;
Fain wou'd I credit thee, thou sweet deceiver :
I fly to meet and to embrace my children ;
Yes ; I will see Hercides : let him come
At midnight to me, to this holy altar,
Where I so often have invok'd the gods
At last perhaps propitious to my vows :
O ye immortal pow'rs, restore my children,
Give back to virtue's paths two gen'rous hearts
Corrupted by an impious vile usurper !

If Seid and Palmira are not mine,
If such is my hard fate, I will adopt
The noble pair, and be their father still.



A C T IV. S C E N E I.

MAHOMET, OMAR.

Omar. **M**Y lord, our secret is discover'd; Seid
Has told Hercides; we are on the verge
Of ruin, yet I know he will obey.

Mab. Reveal'd it, say'st thou?

Omar. Yes: Hercides loves him
With tenderneſs.

Mab. Indeed! what ſaid he to it?

Omar. He ſtood aghaſt, and ſeem'd to pity Zopir.

Mab. He's weak, and therefore not to be entrust'd;
Fools ever will be traitors: but no matter,
Let him take heed; a method may be found
To rid us of ſuch dang'rous witneſſes:
Say, Omar, have my orders been obey'd?

Omar. They have, my lord.

Mab. 'Tis well: remember, Omar,
In one important hour or Mahomet
Or Zopir is no more; if Zopir dies,
The cred'lous people will adore that God
Who thus declar'd for me, and ſav'd his prophet:
Be this our firſt great object; that once done,
Take care of Seid; art thou ſure the poiſon
Will do its office?

Omar. Fear it not, my lord,

Mab. O we muſt work in ſecret, the dark ſhades
Of death muſt hide our purpoſe—whiſt we ſhed
Old Zopir's blood, be ſure you keep Palmira
In deepeſt ignorance; ſhe muſt not know
The ſecret of her birth: her bliſs and mine

Depend

Depend upon it ; well thou know'st, my triumphs
 From error's fruitful source incessant flow :
 The ties of blood, and all their boasted pow'r
 Are mere delusions : what are nature's bonds ?
 Nothing but habit, the mere force of custom :
 Palmira knows no duty but obedience
 To me ; I am her lord, her king, her father,
 Perhaps may add the name of husband to them :
 Her little heart will beat with proud ambition
 To captivate her master—but the hour
 Approaches that must rid me of my foe,
 The hated Zopir : Seid is prepar'd—
 And see, he comes : let us retire.

Omar. Observe

His wild demeanor ; rage and fierce resentment
 Possess his soul.

S C E N E II.

MAHOMET and OMAR, retir'd to one side of the
 stage, SEID at the farther end.

Seid. This dreadful duty then
 Must be fulfill'd.

Mab. Let us begone, in search [To Omar.
 Of other means to make our pow'r secure.

[Exit with Omar.

Seid. [alone] I cou'd not answer: one reproachful
 word

From Mahomet suffic'd : I stood abash'd,
 But not convinc'd : if heav'n requires it of me,
 I must obey ; but it will cost me dear.

S C E N E III.

SEID, PALMIRA.

Seid. Palmira, art thou here ; what fatal cause
 Hath led thee to this seat of horror ?

Pal.

Pal. Fear

And love directed me to find thee, Seid,
To ask thee what dread sacrifice thou mean'st
To offer here; do heav'n and Mahomet
Demand it of thee, must it be? O speak.

Seid. Palmira, thou command'st my ev'ry thought
And ev'ry action; all depend on thee:
Direct 'em as thou wilt, inform my soul,
And guide my hand: be thou my guardian God,
Explain the will of heav'n which yet I know not;
Why am I chos'n to be its instrument
Of vengeance? are the prophet's dread commands
Irrevocable?

Pal. Seid, we must yield in silence,
Nor dare to question his decrees; he hears
Our secret sighs, nor are our sorrows hid
From Mahomet's all seeing eye: to doubt
Is prophanation of the deity.
His God is God alone; he cou'd not else
Be thus victorious, thus invincible.

Seid. He must be Seid's God who is Palmira's:
Yet cannot my astonish'd soul conceive
A being, tender, merciful, and kind,
Commanding murder; then again I think
To doubt is guilt: the priest without remorse
Destroys the victim: by the voice of heav'n
I know that Zopir was condemn'd, I know
That Seid was destin'd to support
The law divine: so Mahomet ordain'd,
And I obey him; fir'd with holy zeal
I go to slay the enemy of God;
And yet methinks another deity
Draws back my arm, and bids me spare the victim:
Religion lost her pow'r when I beheld
The wretched Zopir; duty urg'd in vain
Her cruel plea, exhorting me to murder;
With joy I listen to the plaintive voice
Of soft humanity: but Mahomet—
How awful! how majestic! who can bear
His wrath? his frowns reproach'd my shameful weak-
ness;

Religion

Religion is a dreadful pow'r : alas !
 Palmira, I am lost in doubts and fears,
 Discordant passions tear this feeble heart :
 I must be impious, must desert my faith,
 Or be a murth'rer : Seid was not form'd
 For an assassin ; but 'tis heav'n's command,
 And I have promis'd to avenge its cause :
 The tears of grief and rage united flow,
 Contending duties raise a storm within,
 And thou alone, Palmira, must appease it ;
 Fix my uncertain heart, and give it peace :
 Alas ! without this dreadful sacrifice,
 The tie that binds us is for ever broke ;
 This only can secure thee.

Pal. Am I then
 The price of blood, of Zopir's blood ?

Seid. So heav'n
 And Mahomet decree.

Pal. Love ne'er was meant
 To make us cruel, barb'rous, and inhuman.

Seid. To Zopir's murth'rer, and to him alone,
 Palmira must be giv'n.

Pal. O hard condition !

Seid. But 'tis the will of Mahomet and heav'n.

Pal. Alas !

Seid. Thou know'st the dreadful curse that waits
 On disobedience, everlasting pain.

Pal. If thou must be the instrument of vengeance,
 If at thy hands the blood which thou hast promis'd
 Shall be requir'd—

Seid. What's to be done ?

Pal. I tremble
 To think on't—yet—

Seid. It must be so then : thou
 Hast fix'd his doom ; Palmira has consented.

Pal. Did I consent ?

Seid. Thou didst.

Pal. Detested thought !
 What have I said ?

Seid. By thee the voice of heav'n
 Speaks its last dread command, and I obey :

Yon

Yon fatal altar is the chosen seat
Of Zopir's worship, there he bends the knee
To his false gods; retire, my sweet Palmira.

Pal. I cannot leave thee.

Seid. Thou must not be witness
To such a deed of horror: these, Palmira,
Are dreadful moments: fly to yonder grove,
Thou wilt be near the prophet there: away.

Pal. Zopir must die then?

Seid. Yes: this fated hand
Must drag him to the earth, there murder him,
And bathe yon ruin'd altar in his blood.

Pal. Die by thy hand! I shudder at the thought:
But see! he comes: just heav'n!

[The farther part of the stage opens, and discovers an altar.]

ZOPIR, SEID, PALMIRA, on one side.

Zop. *[standing near the altar]* Ye guardian gods
Of Mecca, threaten'd by an impious sect
Of vile impostors, now assert your pow'r,
And let your Zopir's pray'rs, perhaps the last
He e'er shall make, be heard! the feeble bonds
Of our short peace are broken, and fierce war
Vindictive rages; O if ye support
The cause of this usurper—

Seid. Hear, Palmira, *[Aside to Palmira.*
How he blasphemes!

Zop. May death be Zopir's lot!
I wish for nought on earth but to behold,
In my last hour, and to embrace my children,
To die in their lov'd arms: if yet they live,
If they are here, for something whispers me
That I shall see 'em still.

Pal. His children, said he? *[Aside to Seid.*

Zop. O I shou'd die with pleasure at the sight:
Watch over and protect them, ye kind gods,
O let 'em think like me, but not like me
Be wretched!

Seid. See! he prays to his false gods:
This is the time to end him. *[Draws his sword.*

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Pal.

Pal Do not, Seid.

Seid. To serve my God, to please and merit thee,
This sword, devoted to the cause of heav'n,
Is drawn, and shall destroy its deadliest foe :
Yon dreary walk invites me to the deed,
Methinks the path is bloody, wand'ring ghosts
Glide thro' the shade, and beckon me away.

Pal. What say'st thou, Seid ?

Seid. Ministers of death,
I follow you ; conduct me to the altar,
And guide my trembling hand !

Pal. It must not be ;

'Tis horrible : O stop, my Seid.

Seid. No :

The hour is come, and see ! the altar shakes.

Pal 'Tis heav'n's assent, and we must doubt no more.

Seid. Means it to urge me on, or to restrain ?
Our prophet will reproach me for this weakness :
Palmira !

Pal. Well !

Seid. Address thyself to heav'n ;
I go to do the deed.

[He goes behind the altar where Zopir is retired.]

Pal. *[alone]* O dreadful moment !
What do I feel within ! my blood runs cold :
And yet if heav'n demands the sacrifice,
Am I to judge, to ask, or to complain ?
Where is the heart that knows itself, that knows
Its innocence or guilt ? We must obey :
But hark ! methought I heard the plaintive voice
Of death ; the deed is done—alas ! my Seid.

Seid. *[Returns looking wildly.]* What voice was that ?
where am I ? where's Palmira ?
I cannot see Palmira ; O she's gone,
She's lost for ever.

Pal. Art thou blind to her
Who only lives for thee ?

Seid. Where are we ?

Pal. Speak,
My Seid, is the dreadful sacrifice
Perform'd, and thy sad promise all fulfill'd ?

Seid.

Seid. What say'st thou?

Pal. Zopir? is he dead?

Seid. Who? Zopir?

Pal. Good heav'n, preserve his senses—come, my
Seid,

Let us be gone.

Seid. How will these tott'ring limbs
Support me!—I recover—is it you,
Palmira?

Pal. Yes: what hast thou done?

Seid. Obey'd

The voice of heav'n, seiz'd with this desp'rate hand
His silver hairs, and dragg'd him to the earth:
'Twas thy command: O God! thou could'st not bid me
Commit a crime! trembling and pale a while
I stood aghast, then drew this sacred sword,
And plung'd it in his bosom: what a look
Of tenderness and love the poor old man
Cast on his murderer! a scene so mournful
Ne'er did these eyes behold: my heart retains
And will for ever keep the sad idea:
Wou'd I were dead like him!

Pal. Let us repair
To Mahomet, the prophet will protect us;
Here you're in danger; follow me.

Seid. I cannot:
Palmira, pity me.

Pal. What mournful thought
Can thus depress thee?

Seid. O if thou had'st seen
His tender looks, when from his bleeding side
He drew the fatal weapon forth, and cry'd,
Dear Seid, poor unhappy Seid! Oh
That voice, those looks, and Zopir at my feet
Welt'ring in blood are still before my eyes:
What have we done?

Pal. I tremble for thy life:
O, in the name of all the sacred ties
That bind us, fly and save thyself.

Seid. Away,
And leave me: why did thy ill-fated love

Command this dreadful sacrifice, Palmira ?
Without thy cruel order heav'n itself
Had never been obey'd.

Pal. Unkind reproach !

Cou'd'st thou but know what thy Palmira suffers
How wou'd'st thou pity her !

Seid. What dreadful object
Is that before us ?

[Zopir rises up slowly from behind the altar, and leans upon it.]

Pal. 'Tis the murther'd Zopir ;
Bloody and pale he drags his mangled limbs
Towards us.

Seid. Wilt thou go to him ?

Pal. I must ;

For pity and remorse distract my soul,
And draw me to him.

Zop. *[Comes forward leaning on Palmira.]*

Gentle maid, support me ! *[He sits down.]*

Ungrateful Seid, thou hast slain me ; now
Thou weep'st ; alas ! too late.

S C E N E V.

ZOPIR, SEID, PALMIRA, PHANOR.

Pba. O dreadful sight !

What's here ?

Zop. I wish I cou'd have seen my friend,
Hercides—Phanor, art thou there ?—behold
My murtherer.

[Points to Seid.]

Pba. O guilt ! accursed deed !
Unhappy Seid, look upon—thy father.

Seid. Who ?

Pal. He ?

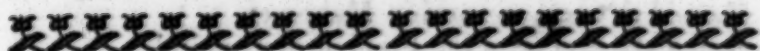
Seid. My father ?

Zop. Gracious heav'n !

Pba. Hercides

In his last moments took me in his arms,
And weeping cry'd, if there be time, O haste,

Prevent



A C T V. S C E N E I.

MAHOMET, OMAR, Guards at a distance.

Omar. **Z**OPIR's approaching death alarms the people,

We have endeavour'd to appease their clamours,
And disavow'd all knowledge of the deed ;
To some, we call'd it the avenging hand
Of heav'n that favours thus its prophet's cause :
With others, we lament his fall, and boast
Thy awful justice that will soon avenge it.
The croud attentive listen to thy praise,
And all the danger of the storm is o'er ;
If ought remains of busy faction's rage
It is but as the tossing of the waves
After the tempest, when the vault of heav'n
Is placid and serene.

Mab. Be it our care

To keep it so : where are my valiant bands ?

Omar. All ready ; Osman in the dead of night
By secret paths conducted them to Mecca.

Mab. 'Tis strange that men must either be deceiv'd
Or forc'd into obedience : Seid knows not
It is a father's blood that he must shed ?

Omar. Who cou'd inform him of it ? he alone
Who knew the secret is no more ; Hercules
Is gone, and Seid soon shall follow him ;
For know, he has already drank the poison ;
His crime was punish'd ere it was committed :
Ev'n whilst he dragg'd his father to the altar
Death lurk'd within his veins ; he cannot live :
Palmira too is safe ; she may be useful :
I've giv'n her hopes of Seid's pardon, that
May win her to our cause ; she dare not murmur,

Besides, her heart is flexible and soft,
 Form'd to obey, to worship Mahomet,
 And make him soon the happiest of mankind :
 Trembling and pale behold they bring her to thee.

Mab. Collect my forces, Omar, and return.

S C E N E II.

MAHOMET, PALMIRA, Guards.

Pal. O heav'n ! where am I ? gracious God !

Mab. Palmira,

Be not alarm'd ; already I have fix'd
 Thy fate and Mecca's : know, the great event
 That fills thy soul with horror is a myst'ry
 'Twixt heav'n and me that's not to be reveal'd :
 But thou art free, and happy : think no more
 Of Seid, nor lament him ; leave to me
 The fate of men, be thankful for thy own :
 Thou know'st that Mahomet hath lov'd thee long,
 That I have ever been a father to thee ;
 Perhaps a nobler fate, and fairer title
 May grace thee still, if thou deserv'st it ; therefore
 Blot from thy memory the name of Seid,
 And let thy soul aspire to greater blessings
 Than it could dare to hope for ; let thy heart
 Be my last noblest victory, and join
 The conquer'd world to own me for its master.

Pal. What joys, what blessings, or what happiness
 Can I expect from thee, thou vile impostor ?
 Thou bloody savage ! This alone was wanting,
 This cruel insult to complete my woes :
 Eternal father, look upon this king,
 This holy prophet, this all-pow'rful God !
 Whom I ador'd : thou monster, to betray
 Two guiltless hearts into the crying sin
 Of parricide ; thou infamous seducer
 Of my unguarded youth, how dar'st thou think,
 Stain'd as thou art with my dear father's blood,
 To gain Palmira's heart ? but know, proud tyrant,
 Thou

Prevent a paricide, and stop the arm
Of Seid; in my breast the tyrant lodg'd
The dreadful secret; now I suffer for it,
And die by Mahomet's detested hand:
Haste, Phanor, fly, inform the hapless Zopir,
That Seid and Palmira are—his children.

Seid. Palmira!

Pal. Thou my brother?

Zop. O ye gods!

O nature, thou hast not deceiv'd me then,
When thou didst plead for them! unhappy Seid,
What cou'd have urg'd thee to so foul a deed?

Seid. My gratitude, my duty, my religion, [*Kneeling.*
All that mankind hold sacred, urg'd me on
To do the worst of actions:—give me back
That fatal weapon.

Pal. [*Laying hold of Seid's arm.*] Plunge it in my breast.
I was the cause of my dear father's murder;
And incest is the price of parricide:

Seid. Strike both: heav'n hath not punishment enough
For crimes like ours.

Zop. Let me embrace my children: [*Embracing them.*
The gods have pour'd into my cup of sorrow
A draught of sweetest happiness: I die,
Contented, and resign me to my fate:
But you must live, my children; you, my Seid,
And you, Palmira, by the sacred name
Of nature, by thy dying father's blood,
Fast flowing from the wound which thou hast made,
Let me intreat you, live; revenge yourselves,
Revenge the injur'd Zopir, but preserve
Your precious lives; the great th' important hour
Approaches, that must change the mournful scene:
Th' offended people, ere to-morrow's dawn,
Will rise in arms and punish the usurper;
My blood will add fresh fuel to their rage;
Let us await the issue.

Seid. O I fly.

To sacrifice the monster, to take vengeance
For a dear father's life, or lose my own.

N 3

S C E N E.

S C E N E VI.

ZOPIR, SEID, PALMIRA, OMAR, Attendants.

Omar. Guards, seize the murth'rer ; Mahomet is
come

To punish guilt, and execute the laws.

Zop. What do I hear ?

Seid. Did Mahomet command thee
To punish Seid ?

Pal. Execrable tyrant !

Was not the murder done by thy command ?

Omar. 'Twas not commanded.

Seid. Well have I deserv'd
This just reward of my credulity.

Omar. Soldiers, obey.

Pal. O stop, ye shall not——

Omar. Madam,

If Seid's life is dear to you, submit
With patience, lest the prophet's anger fall
Like thunder on your head ; if you obey,
Great Mahomet is able to protect you :
Guards, lead her to the king.

Pal. O take me, death,
From this sad scene of never-ending woe !

[Seid and Palmira are carry'd off.]

Zop. They're gone, they're lost : *[to Phanor.]* O most
unhappy father,

The wound which Seid gave is not so deep
So painful as this parting.

Pha. See, my lord,
The day appears, and the arm'd multitudes
Press onward to defend the cause of Zopir.

Zop. Support me, Phanor : yet thy friend may live
To punish this vile hypocrite ; at least
In death may serve my dear—my cruel—children.

A C T

Thou art not yet invincible : the veil
Is off that hid thee, and the hand of vengeance
Uprais'd to scourge thy guilt: dost thou not hear
The madd'ning multitude already arm'd
In the defence of injur'd innocence ?
From death's dark shades my murder'd father comes
To lead them on : O that these feeble hands
Cou'd tear thee piece-meal, thee and all thy train !
Wou'd I cou'd see them welt'ring in their blood ;
See Mecca, and Medina, Asia, all
Combin'd against thee ! that the credulous world
Wou'd shake off thy vile chains, and thy religion
Become the jest and scorn of all mankind
To after ages ! may that hell, whose threats
Thou hast so oft denounc'd 'gainst all who dar'd
To doubt thy false divinity, now open
Her fiery gates, and be thy just reward !
These are the thanks I owe thee for thy bounties,
And these the pray'rs I make for Mahomet.

Mah. I see I am betray'd ; but be it so :
Whoe'er thou art, learn henceforth to obey ;
For know, my heart——

SCENE III.

MAHOMET, PALMIRA, OMAR, ALI, Attendants.

Omar. The secret is reveal'd ;
Hercides told it in his dying moments :
The people all enrag'd have forc'd the prison :
They're up in arms, and bearing on their shoulders
The bloody corpse of their unhappy chief,
Lament his fate, and cry aloud for vengeance :
All is confusion : Seid at their head
Excites them to rebellion, and cries out,
' I am a parricide ;' with rage and grief
He seems distracted ; with one voice the croud
Unite to curse the prophet and his God :
Ev'n those, who promis'd to admit our forces

Within

Within the walls of Mecca, have conspir'd
 With them to raise their desp'rate arms against thee ;
 And nought is heard but cries of death and vengeance.

Pal. Just heav'n pursue him, and defend the cause
 Of innocence !

Mab. Well, what have we to fear ? [To Omar.

Omar. Omar, my lord, with your few faithful friends,
 Despising danger, are prepar'd to brave
 The furious storm, and perish at your feet.

Mab. Alone I will defend you all ; come near :
 Behold, and say I act like Mahomet.

S C E N E IV.

MAHOMET, OMAR, and his party on one side,
 SEID and the people on the other.
 PALMIRA, in the middle.

Seid. Revenge my father, seize the traitor.

Mab. People,

Born to obey me, listen to your master.

Seid. Hear not the monster ; follow me :

[He comes forward a little, and then staggers.

O heav'n !

What sudden darkness spreads o'er my dim eyes ?

Now strike, my friends—O I am dying.

Mab. Ha !

Then all is well.

Pal. My brother, can'st thou shed
 No blood but Zopir's ?

Seid. Yes : come on—I cannot ;
 Some God unnerves me.

[He faints.

Mab. Hence let ev'ry foe
 Of Mahomet be taught to fear and tremble :
 Know, ye proud infidels, this hand alone
 Hath pow'r to crush you all, to me the God
 Of nature delegates his sov'reign pow'r :
 Acknowledge then his prophet, and his laws,
 'Twixt Mahomet and Seid let that God

Decide

Decide the contest, which of us foe'er
Is guilty, now, this moment let him perish!

Pal. My brother—Seid—can this monster boast
Such pow'r? the people stand astonish'd at him,
And tremble at his voice; and wilt thou yield
To Mahomet?

Seid. Alas! the hand of heav'n

[Supported by his attendants.]

Is on me, and th' involuntary crime
Is too severely punish'd: O Palmira,
In vain was Seid virtuous: O if heav'n
Chastises thus our errors, what must crimes
Like thine expect, detested Mahomet?

What cause hast thou to tremble—O I die;
Receive me, gracious heav'n, and spare Palmira.

Pal. 'Tis not, ye people, 'tis not angry heav'n
Pursues my Seid; No: he's poison'd—

[Dies.]

Mab. *[Interrupting her, and addressing himself to the people.]*
Learn

From Seid's fate, ye unbelievers, how,
To rev'rence Mahomet whom heav'n defends;
Nature and death, ye see, have heard my voice,
And this pale corpse hath witness'd their obedience;
The sword of fate hangs o'er your heads, beware
It fall not on you: thus will I reward
All impious rebels, all vile infidels,
And punish ev'ry word and thought against me.
If I withhold my rage, and let you live,
Remember, traitors, that you owe your beings
To my indulgence; hasten to the temple,
Prostrate yourselves before the throne of grace,
And deprecate the wrath of Mahomet. *[The people retire.]*

Pal. O stay, and hear me, people—the barbarian
Poison'd my brother—monster, rais'd by crimes
To empire thus, and deify'd by guilt,
Thou murth'rer of Palmira's hapless race,
Complete thy work, and take my wretched life:
O my dear brother, let me follow thee!

[She seizes her brother's sword and stabs herself.]

Mab. Seize, and prevent her—

Pal.

Pal. 'Tis too late ; I die :
 And dying hope a God more just than thine
 Has yet in store a state of happiness
 For injur'd innocence : let Mahomet
 Reign here in peace : this world was made for tyrants.

[Dies.]

Mab. She's gone ; she's lost ; the only dear reward
 I wish'd to keep of all my crimes : in vain
 I fought, and conquer'd ; Mahomet is wretched
 Without Palmira : Conscience, now I feel thee,
 And feel that thou can'st rive the guilty heart.
 O thou eternal God, whom I have made
 The instrument of ill, whom I have wrong'd,
 Brav'd, and blasphem'd ; O thou, whom yet I fear,
 Behold me self-condemn'd, behold me wretched,
 Ev'n whilst the world adores me : vain was all
 My boasted pow'r : I have deceiv'd mankind ;
 But how shall I impose on my own heart ?
 A murder'd father, and two guiltless children
 Must be reveng'd ; come, ye unhappy victims,
 And end me quickly !—Omar, we must strive
 To hide this shameful weakness, save my glory,
 And let me reign o'er a deluded world :
 For Mahomet depends on fraud alone,
 And to be worshipp'd never must be known.

END of the TWENTY-THIRD VOLUME.



